

Europeanization at the Urban Level: What is the Role of Europe in Bristol's 'Multi-Level' Governance?

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Abstract

Since the late 1980's the EU has taken an increasingly influential role in urban issues. Through a series of initiatives, it is argued that urban institutions are able to access a number of resources including information and financial support. Europe has potential to drive innovative governance through its promotion of cohesion, competitiveness and community engagement. Proponents of Europe's role in urban issues argue that Europe's engagement in urban issues provide "added value" in ways that national programmes cannot. The added value refers mainly to innovation, policy advancements, and improvements to institutional structures.

In order to scope the added value, this paper explores the concept of Europeanization of Bristol's governance structures. This paper takes a holistic view of Europe and does not seek to isolate individual urban programmes. Rather, this paper focuses on the interplay of a plethora of initiatives that have been present in Bristol over the last decade or so.

In order to understand the role of Europe, the paper considers Bristol's institutional setting and suggests that the governance structure is saturated by a number of competing and overlapping roles for urban actors and recommends rationalisation of its players. It is then explained how Europe intends to add value to the urban cause, before identifying a number of factors that limit the potential role for Europe in Bristol, and outlining possible ways to address these. In particular, the paper considers that the role of the nation state and the strategic leadership in Bristol as limiting factors.

The paper concludes by investigating the potential impact of EU expansion in terms of its effect on Bristol. It is suggested that increased membership has influenced Europe's approach to urban policy and that this could have a profound effect on Europe's role in Bristol and that the opportunity for maximum European engagement may have been missed.

Key Words: EU Urban Policy, governance, Europeanization, added value, nation state, future European policy, Bristol.

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1.0 Introduction

Since the late 1980's The European Union (EU) has been increasingly encroaching on the way cities across Europe are governed and what policies are implemented, in what is commonly referred to as the "European turn of cities". This turn has developed as cities have increasingly viewed the EU as a new political arena in which new opportunities and challenges have developed, and where attachment to national governments have become more distant at the expense of the European level of governance. This has occurred in an era of transnational integration, globalisation and economic interdependence and intensifying locational competition (John 2001, Le Galés 2002) and is closely associated with European integration and more recently, Europeanization.

The concept of Europeanization has reinvigorated the debate over the European Union's impact on national, regional, sub regional and local level political structures, particularly highlighting the widely acknowledged shift from vertical 'government' to horizontal 'governance'). Some commentators focus on the "re-scaling" of governance arenas and networks (Brenner, 1999; MacLeod, 1999; MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999; Swyngedouw, 2005) whereas others have focused attention on the nature of the territorial focus emerging at new scales (Albrechts et al., 2001; Albrechts et al., 2003; Healey, 2004, 2006; Salet & Faludi, 2000; Salet et al., 2003), creating new opportunities for cities (Le Gales, 2002) and their actors resulting in a situation where "above all, no player longer possesses a monopoly of rule production or of coercion" (Le Gales 2002 : 98). Academics have also considered the extent to which new forms of politics are developing (Healey, 1997a; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003) and whether the changes are progressive or regressive in their direction (Delladetsima, 2003; Harvey, 1989; Imrie & Raco, 1999; Swyngedouw, 2005).

Theories of governance provide an analytical framework to attempt to explain this shift and describe the affect of these changes on political structures at the national and regional level but increasingly at the urban level (Marshall, 2003, 2004, 2005). At the local level, governance addresses the perception that the power of urban government to affect growth trajectories is influenced by factors beyond formal institutional capacities (Geddes, 2005). It is argued that local urban actors aim to decrease financial dependence on the national government and enhance cooperation with a broader coalition of forces (Harding, 2000), "which seeks to transform the state into an enabling partner" (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003, p. 55) This understanding of governance assumes that formalised government structures interact with civil and private sectors, which it is suggested, allows these actors a degree of influence over urban policy at the supranational level (Le Gales, 2002).

Urban governance typology is increasingly considered to be influenced by the processes at the European level (Wolfhardt *et al* 2005). Although the EU lacks an explicit European urban policy, its core principles of cohesion, subsidiarity and participatory governance, and its sustainability agenda ensures that cities and Europe are inextricably linked. This linkage creates potentially very destabilising effects on cities. On one hand, Europe acts as an arena for cities to demonstrate their political legitimacy for citizen representation beyond national borders, allowing for horizontal and vertical networks to by-pass national government (Le Gales, 2002). Europe thus represents a new space for political manoeuvre and innovation at the urban level. However, the complexities of European programmes, the constraints of coalitions and networks and the subsequent perceived inability to influence policy created a destabilising effect of this new space. These opportunities and constraints in turn affect emerging modes of governance and have been explained through the term 'Europeanization'.

This paper seeks to further our understanding of urban level Europeanization using Bristol (UK) as a case study, and is structured as follows:

Section 1.1 introduces the background to the role of Europe in urban policy. Section 1.2 reviews the existing literature on the concept of Europeanization and explains why it is important to address Europeanization at the urban level. It demonstrates how its interpretation has evolved from the affect of Europe in the context of national policy terms, to a more rounded understanding, based on a reciprocal process at the urban level.

Section 1.3 explains the role of cities in the process, and section 1.4 introduces the concept of multi-level governance. Section 1.5 reviews the literature on the relevance of these concepts and processes in the UK urban context. Having introduced the topic background, section 2.0 outlines the research aim, objectives (Figure 1) and associated hypotheses, followed by section 3.0 that explains the research methodology applied to achieve the objectives.

- 1) Identify and critically evaluate the interaction between the relevant actors in Bristol's multilevel governance structure.**
- 2) Critically assess the added value of European urban initiatives in Bristol from a governance perspective**
- 3) Identify factors affecting the added value of Europe to Bristol's urban governance and opportunities for enhancement**
- 4) Consider the direction of future European urban policy and assess its potential significance for Bristol.**

Figure 1.0: Research Objectives

Sections 4.0, 5.0, 6.0 and 7.0 address the objectives using the analysis of the data obtained. It is argued that there is evidence to show that two-way Europeanization is occurring in Bristol to an extent, but that factors at the local, regional, national and European level limit its added value in terms of its effect on the city's governance structure. Furthermore, it is argued that European policy is moving away from the community-based approach to meet broader economic objectives. Section 8.0 sets out the research conclusions.

1.1 European Urban Policy

The role of the EU in domestic urban issues is a contested subject. European urban policy professionals are divided on whether a European urban policy should (or even does) exist¹.

European involvement in urban issues emerged under the EC administration of Jacques Delors (1985 – 1994)², which began to recognise cities as political actors, and legitimised them to establish their role in and pressurise national political systems (Hooghe 1996)³. Delors' presidency initiated the first of 3 stages of European involvement at the urban level:

- 1) 1980's – Focus on Environmental issues⁴:
- 2) 1990's – Focus on cohesion issues
- 3) Late 1990's - Economic Competitiveness

The first phase was characterised in the 1990 EC Green Paper on the Urban Environment which emphasised the environmental phase and was an open expression of supranational interest in urban issues⁵. The second phase developed on the Maastricht principle of cohesion and in that sense offered legitimacy of the role of the EC at the urban level (Frank, 2006) and in urban "spatial planning" through the ESDP⁶. At the local level, the EC took a more active role, and introduced the URBAN I and URBAN II initiatives⁷, aimed at strengthening the socio-integration of deprived areas in conjunction with instilling the normative issue of good governance (see white paper on European Governance). In theory, local actions gain a European aspect, and vice-versa. This idea is investigated in the following section through the concept of Europeanization.

¹ For a comprehensive summary of European Urban Policy, see Frank (2006) or Atkinson (2001).

² There is view that the role of cities in Europe has been in decline since the EC leadership of Presidents Santer (1995-1999) and Prodi (1999-2004)

³ The institutionalisation of local (and regional) government, for example Local Authorities opening offices in Brussels, has further strengthened this movement.

⁴ A distinctive approach specific to urban policy was slow to emerge in the European Commission primarily largely due to the priority attached to the Common Agricultural Policy (Balchin *et al*, 1999).

⁵ Reference to the role of the nation state in the Green Paper was limited to the extent that it was though "there were only two levels of action in Europe: the Community and the cities" (Kunzmann, 1990:894 cited in Frank 2006). This phase was highlighted by a highly normative version of an urbanized Europe ('Europe of cities')

⁶ The ESDP is a document approved by the Informal Council of Ministers of Spatial Planning of European Commission in 1999. It is a legally non-binding document forming a policy framework with 60 policy options for all tiers of political administration with a planning responsibility and aims to achieve a balanced and sustainable spatial development strategy for member states

⁷ URBAN I (1994-1999) was intended to extend and improve coordination of local community support for urban regeneration projects. EC guidelines (96/C200/04) targeted urban areas of no more than 100,000 participants and that experienced high unemployment levels, decaying urban fabric, and poor housing/amenities (Bristol URBAN 1 Community Initiative Programme). URBAN II was its successor (2000-2006) URBAN II was the Community Initiative of the European Regional Development Fund, and invested €728 million (approx £455 million) in some of the most deprived communities of the member countries (see Appendix 3 for background to URBAN programmes in Bristol).

More recently, European rhetoric is associated with economic competitiveness. Whilst some view this approach as a 'threat' to cohesion policy (Hooghe & Marks, 2001:105), the EC considers that the place for urban issues is reinforced by 'fully integrating actions in this field into programmes' (COM, 2004: xxxii).

1.2 Europeanization

The top down impact of the EU on its member states is traditionally the most widely adopted interpretation of Europeanization, based on the arguments of the 'New Regionalist School', which looks at the unprecedented way that the territorial framework of societies is being constantly eroded and rebuilt. Michael Keating suggests that sub-national identities have been progressively enhanced, culminating in a 'reterritorialization' of European space creating more heterogeneous and pluralist city regions (Keating 2001:387). Keating explains that policy options available to city regions are constrained by the external competitive environment. These constraints are considered to be contrasting and wide-ranging often with competing agendas.

Héritier *et al* (2001) defined Europeanization as:

"the process of influence deriving from European decisions and impacting member states' policies and political and administrative structures" (2001: 3).

Others have viewed Europeanization as the *accumulation* of policy competences at the EU level⁸. Both of these approaches fail to consider additional elements of Europeanization and it is argued, that each represents an outdated view since alternative views have now been established.

Bulmer and Radaelli (2004) pose that Europeanization consists of:

'processes of a) construction b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and sub national) discourse, political structures and public policies' (2004: 4),

This interpretation represents a more rounded understanding in that it implies a more interactive process comprising of the 'upload' and download capabilities of Europeanization referred to by other scholars (Marshall 2004, 2005) (Figure 1.2).

⁸ For instance, Cowles, Caporaso and Risse (2001: 1) equated Europeanization with 'the emergence and the development at the European level of distinct structures of governance.'

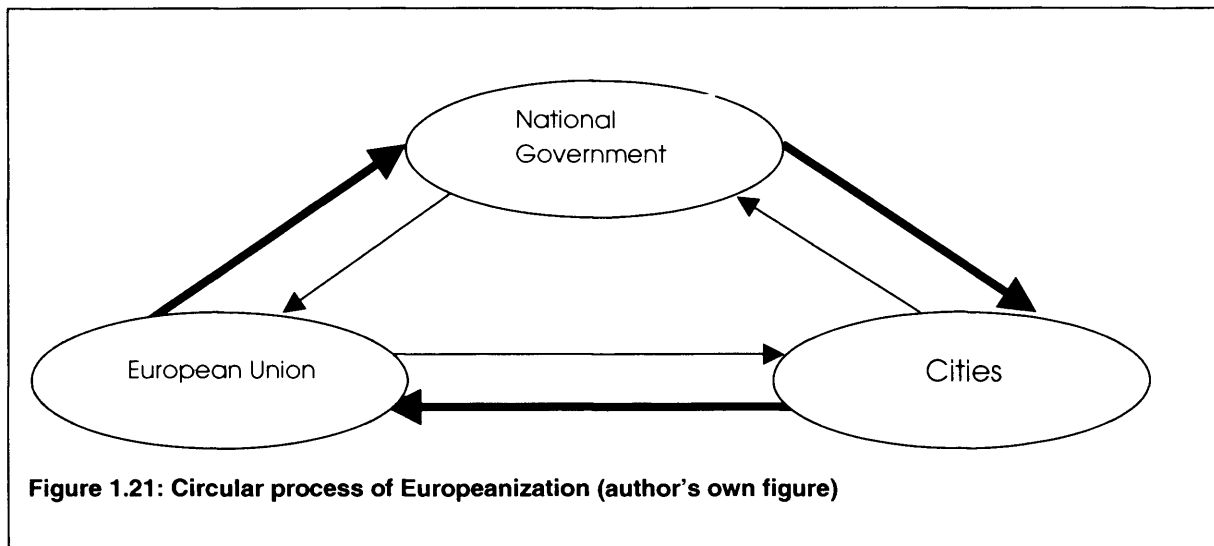
Download Europeanization	Changes in policies, practices, preferences or participants within local governance systems, as a result of EU programmes
Upload Europeanization	The transfer of innovative urban practices to the supranational arenas, resulting in local initiatives being incorporated in pan-European policies or programmes (either directly or indirectly through national government)

Figure 1.20 Upload and Download Europeanization (adapted from Marshall, 2005)

There is a growing appreciation of the EU's role as an arena for national and sub-national actors to perform (e.g. Hanf and Soetendorp 1998: 1). As the EU's powers and involvement in urban issues have increased, national (and sub-national) actors have adjusted their expectations and activities, and taken it upon themselves to lobby directly to Brussels and Strasbourg, thereby bypassing their national governments⁹. In this sense, the EU has also been interpreted as an *arena* for horizontal transfer of concepts and policies between member states. Europeanization can be viewed as a component of 'policy transfer' (Bomberg and Peterson, 2000), and 'cross-loading' through which states share ideas and practices (Howell, 2003) and add value to the domestic urban system of governance (Le Gales, 2002). In this mode, the EU acts as a facilitator of inter-state transfer in aspects more than just policy, including mechanisms of learning and borrowing such as the open method of coordination (OMC) (Borra & Greve, 2004; Faludi, A. 2004)

This interpretation arose from the empirical observation that member states pre-empt domestic adjustment by shaping an emergent EU policy in their own image (Bomberg and Peterson 2000: 8) and suggests the concept is not simply convergence or harmonisation. In what could be considered a triangulation process, cities attempt to 'domesticate' the EU by uploading national models to the EU (Figure 1.21)

⁹ Some scholars consider that Europeanization associates the EU with acting as a discursively constructed external constraint on national autonomy or 'smokescreen' for domestic political manoeuvres (Bache, 2005, Le Gales, 2002). This view suggests that domestic actors have the ability to hide behind their own intentions. For example, coining the term 'Europe' in the public domain could be invoked to legitimize financially costly and politically controversial measures such as labour market reform, anti-competitive measures or environmental protection (see: Buller and Gamble, 2002; Radaelli, 2004).



In this view, Europeanization is

'circular rather than unidirectional, and cyclical rather than one off' (Goetz 2002: 4).

Laffan and Stubb (2003) elaborate on this definition:

'the process whereby national systems (institutions, policies, governments) adapt to EU policies and integration more generally, while also themselves shaping the European Union'. (2003: 70)

Research suggests that this interpretation has become increasingly prominent through the actions of policy networks for example EUROCITIES (Heinelt & Niederhafner, 2008) and cross-national learning networks such as URBACT, which act as stages for cities to engage at the European level, through transnational cooperation (Colomb, 2007). This interpretation has led scholars to question the role of the city, and its function in a modern day and expanded European Union (Healy, 2006), and what impact this has on the role of the nation state.

1.3 Role of Cities in Europe

Laurence Carmichael considers whether cities are key players in Europe's multi-level governance or whether they remain minor players pushed aside by other players (Carmichael, 2005). She hypothesises that the EU could potentially present both policy and governance challenges, which could in turn impact on 'the nature of local interplay between leadership and community involvement' (2005; 129). Participation of the sub-national level is limited due to sector-based competencies and national structures, which traditionally promote vertical partnerships (Carmichael 2005, Corocan, 2003).

Carmichael concludes that a complimentary engagement of actors from the neighbourhood through to European level is required in order to achieve the balance between economic competitiveness and social inclusion. Her conclusion suggests that it is the role of the city as an entity to seek engagement with Europe, but does not specify on whether or how Europe can contribute to this. This implies that it is the responsibility of the city to seek engagement with Europe, rather than a series of rules imposed on city governance from Brussels itself. This contradicts anecdotal evidence, which suggests that the public perception in the UK is that Europe 'imposes itself' on British governance. The mechanisms for how Europe affects the urban level and the factors affecting it are addressed in this research.

This type of analysis represents a departure from traditional European integration theory, which suggests that Europe sought integration by imposing processes seeking homogeneity across Europe's major cities. A number of processes have contributed to this shift in thinking, namely the increased recognition of the role of national governments to monitor and manage the degree of European influence and the pre-existing structures, which limit the level, and scope of integration. Carmichael's assessment requires further elaboration and her analytical framework provides a useful tool for researching how other actors affect the role of Europe in Bristol.

The following section introduces the concept of multi-level governance, which characterizes the evolving relationship between actors at different territorial levels and from public, private and voluntary sectors (Jachtenfuchs & Kohler-Koch 2004) and has an established place in theorising on the European Union (Bache & Chapman 2007).

1.4 Multi-Level Governance (MLG)

It is argued that MLG enables a more comprehensive understanding of the development of European-polity, in comparison to other more traditional approaches such as policy analysis, classical integration theory or the constitutional debate. Founded up EU cohesion policy, the concept has more recently been applied more widely to EU decision-making generally. It is considered that the URBAN initiative is an expression of the EU's commitment to MLG.

An early definition of multi-level governance expressed the concept as 'a system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers' (Marks, 1993: 392). This useful, yet broad conception of MLG has been refined by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks (2003; 2004), who distinguished between two types of multi-level governance (Table 1.40).

Type I multi-level governance

This type of MLG considers that the dispersion of authority is restricted to a limited number of (non-overlapping) general purpose jurisdictional boundaries at a limited number of territorial levels. Here, jurisdictions are general-purpose with lower level jurisdictions 'nested' into higher ones. The distribution of authority in this typology is considered to be relatively stable and the focus of analysis is on individual governments or institutions rather than on specific issues or policies. This type of governance is considered to be a traditional UK style political system.

Type II multi-level governance

This typology represents a more complex entity which is characterised by fluidity and consisting of innumerable (often over-lapping) jurisdictions, each focused around specific policy sectors and issues. In this typology, the distribution of authority is less stable and the focus of analysis is more on specific issues and policy areas than on individual governments or institutions. This has its problems, with issues of accountability and responsibility.

Type I	Type II
General-purpose jurisdictions	Task-specific jurisdictions
Non-intersecting memberships	Intersecting memberships
Jurisdictions at a limited number of levels	No limit to the number of jurisdictional levels
System-wide architecture	Flexible design

Table 1.40 Type I and Type II Multi-Level Governance (Source, Hooghe & Marks, 2004 cited in Bache & Chapman, 2007)

Bache (2005) argues that both types of MLG are not mutually exclusive, and that they co-exist. In the British context, Bache suggests that “general-purpose jurisdictions exist alongside special purpose jurisdiction and that formal institutions of government operate, and indeed create, special purpose bodies to carry out particular tasks or address particular problems” (Bache 2005, no page numbers). There may be tensions between the two, for example in relation to issues of accountability over particular decisions and outcomes. But such tensions and their resolution are intrinsic to the multi-level governance model.

At the local level, the last decade has seen an increase in the number of partnerships in operation. According to Bache (2005) this proliferation of task-specific cross-sectoral bodies represents “clear evidence that the EU has promoted *Type II* multi-level governance at the regional, at regional, **local and sub-local** levels” (Bache no page number; authors own emphasis). However, Bache warns that although this signals a shift in the nature of governance towards consensualism, that the role of localities in the UK remains weak and there is no suggestion that this situation has been significantly affected by the EU¹⁰. Marshall (2005) poses that European engagement at the urban level encourages more partnerships, thus accentuating fragmentation of local governance (2005: 673). This research considers whether this is applicable in Bristol.

In their study into the sub-national level in the Netherlands, Fleurke & Willemse (2007) found that the EU influenced sub-national decision making to a fairly large extent, and that some of this influence can be concurrently constraining as well as enhancing. At the local level, they found that the influence of the EU is predominantly enhancing and indirect, while at the provincial level it is predominantly constraining and direct. This assessment opens questions to the degree of EU influence at Bristol’s local level addressing the role of

¹⁰ This understanding is reflected in the work by Carpenter (2006) who asserts that the EU has limited scope in affecting the governance structures in the UK.

partnerships, and how Europe has helped shape their operation in Bristol in the structure of MLG.

1.5 Urban Europeanization in the UK

In terms of Europeanization at the urban level, research into British urban policy has tended to focus on the changing pattern of domestic governance as a result of European Union influence (Marshall 2004; Paulus 2000; Tofarides 2003, Wolffhardt *et al* 2005) (Table 1.50). It is noted that some studies have focused specifically on one element of European Union intervention in cities, where as others have focused on urban policy generally (Marshall 2004a/b).

City	European Urban Policy	Studies
Birmingham	General	Marshall 2004, 2005
Glasgow	General	Marshall 2004, 2005
Liverpool	URBAN I & II	Paulus, 2005, Wolffhardt <i>et al</i> 2005
Park Royal, London	URBAN I	Paulus, 2005
Manchester	URBAN I & II	Wolffhardt <i>et al</i> , 2005
Sheffield	URBAN I	Tofarides, 2003
Europe-wide	URBAN I	Carpenter, 2006
Derry/Londonderry (Northern Ireland)	URBAN I	Murtagh & McKay, 2003

Table 1.50: Research into European Urban Policies in UK Cities

Marshall (2005) uses the cities of Birmingham and Glasgow (both recipients of large amounts of European funding) as case studies, and found that 'downward adaptation pressures have caused urban councils to embrace change and new modes of working' (2005: 676) Specifically, Marshall finds that cities have generally adopted more strategic and holistic approaches to regeneration that are intrinsic to EU programming requirements. Other scholars have also identified the incorporation of EU programming practices in domestic practices in the UK (Bachtler and Taylor 2003) and particularly in the newer member states and also Mediterranean countries (Bull & Jones, 2006), noting a contrasting impact between north and southern member states (Chorianopoulos, 2002). The idea of

embracing EU practices into mainstream governance structures is considered in this research in relation to Bristol, as the chosen case study.

Some commentators have criticised the partnership approach, which is intrinsic to European funding programmes, arguing that they have led to too many actors, which have slowed down governance, and impeded the potential for projects to have a positive effect on local areas. The institutional arena and the specific role of actors therefore require assessment to understand the urban governance arena and the implications both to and from Europe.

2.0 Aim and objectives

This research uses the term Europeanization to frame an analysis of the role Europe plays in terms of 'added value' to the city of Bristol. In order to gauge the added value, it is considered necessary to explain the existing governance system and institutional map including the roles of urban actors, as it is argued that pre-existing structures are key to Europeanization research at the urban level (Wolfhardt *et al* 2005).

This research seeks to address the factors influencing the role of Europe in the city in the context of multi-level governance, particularly the pressures from European and national institutions. Finally, the impact of EU expansion is considered in respect of the future of European policy and what ramifications these changes are having at the urban level.

Though it is acknowledged that the research objectives are ambitious and wide-ranging, it is considered that they all require investigation to enable a thorough assessment of what Europe's role is in terms of Bristol's MLG. The literature review informs hypotheses against which each identified objective is addressed (Table 2.0).

	Objective	Hypothesis
1	Identify and critically evaluate the interaction between the relevant actors in Bristol's multilevel governance structure	There is a complex institutional setting in Bristol limiting the efficiency of MLG.
2	Critically assess the added value of European urban initiatives in Bristol from a governance perspective	European Urban Initiatives have had a limited effect on the city's governance
3	Identify factors affecting the added value of Europe to Bristol's urban governance and opportunities for enhancement	Factors affecting the added value are controlled by national government.

4	Consider the direction of future European urban policy and assess its potential significance for Bristol.	The role for Europe in Bristol will be reduced due to EU expansion.
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Table 2.0 Research objectives and hypotheses

Having identified the research objectives, the following section describes the philosophical background to support the research methodology. The research and data analysis methods are explained before each of the above objectives and hypotheses are addressed.

3.0 Methodology

Philosophy is an unavoidable and intrinsic component of research in social science (Graham, 2001) and thus forms the basis of this research methodology. As an intrinsic component, it is important to validate the philosophical ideas that shape and justify the chosen research method. Hermeneutic science refers to the explanatory and interpretive reasoning to the underlying philosophy. The nature of this investigation requires a deep understanding of the questions asked and the interplay of each result obtained.

It is also noted that in choosing suitable research methods, a number of factors should be considered. Phenomenology considers how the researcher is able to interpret how individuals communicate their views (Kitchen & Tate, 2000). For example, establishing on what the basis an individual reaches their conclusion i.e. whether it is through pre-conceived conceptions or whether it is as a result of direct experience. In order to understand this and to enable the most objective approach, an empathic understanding of individual behaviour is fundamental to phenomenological research (Johnston, 1977).

Reflecting on policy issues and analysing them requires an understanding of the learning processes involved. In this context, 'learning' is meant in the field of organisation studies (Argyris & Schön, 1974; 1996) and in the philosophy of pragmatism, this is referred to as "social learning tradition". This theory focuses on the course of 'action' i.e. a learning process starts and ends with action and flows from the attempt to change reality through action over time. Schon (1994) poses that:

"a learning activity must also be new to the actor, begin and end with more than one event, and be transferable from one kind of situation to another"

(in Barbanente & Tedesco, 2002: 2 authors own emphasis).

This view is relevant in the context of this research. For example if a European urban programme was considered to be a learning activity, then its content must be new to the recipient area in order for the learning process to be worthwhile.

3.1 Methods

The nature of the investigation ensures that qualitative research methods are most appropriate. Measuring the 'role' of Europe in a city's governance structure is not something that can be easily quantified. The most appropriate research methods to achieve the project aim and objectives are based on a case study of the city of Bristol and semi-structured interviews with relevant urban actors and those familiar with Bristol and/or European urban policy. Each method is explained and justified below.

3.2 Case Study: City of Bristol, South West UK.

The research is based on a case study of Bristol. It is acknowledged that case studies have been criticised for being too narrowly focused to allow meaningful conclusions, although they remain an extremely popular research method in areas of political and social enquiry (Gomme *et al* 2004). It is considered that the topic of urban governance is so city specific and that case studies provide the best mechanism for testing the existing theories. Whilst a comparison study would undoubtedly be suitable for research of this nature, this approach was considered to be beyond the scope of the researcher given time and resource constraints.

Introduction to Case Study: Bristol

With a population of 380,751 (2001), Bristol is the largest city and 'regional capital' of south west England (Figure 5.2). It is the sixth largest city in the country after London, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield and is one of eight English Core Cities outside of London as defined by the core cities group (COMEDIA, 2002, Bristol CC, 2003). Since the abolition of Avon County Council in 1996, the city region is split between four unitary authorities with the City of Bristol at the core (Boddy *et al*, 2003).

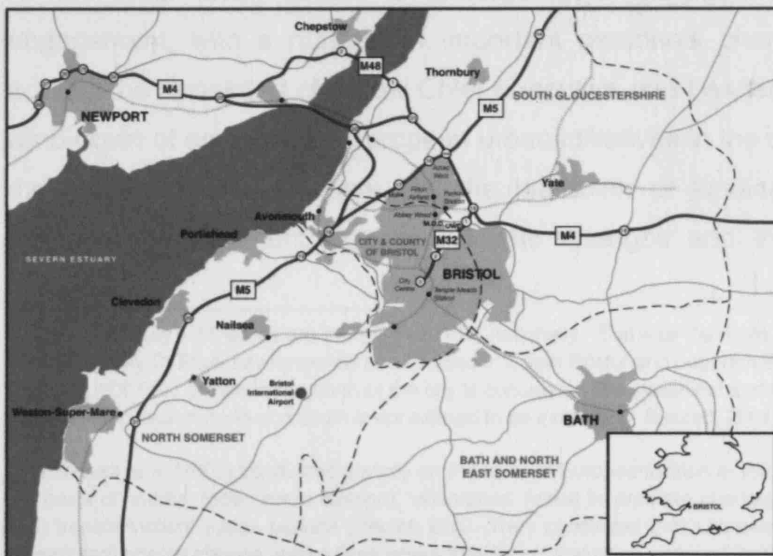


Figure 3.20: Bristol city-region (Source: Tallon, 2003)

It is a relatively successful city in the national context (Boddy, 2003) and has shown a drastic economic resurgence in the last decade or so (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2008).

However, there is marked social polarisation in the city in terms of deprivation and particularly in education levels¹¹. This social polarisation is a challenge to the running of the city and despite a number of area-based initiatives (ABIs) and millions of pounds of public and private money being spent in the city towards improving the public realm and economic opportunities for the city residents, the socio-economic problems persist and the spatial spread constant.

3.2.1 Case Study Rationale

There are both conceptual and empirical reasons for researching the role of Europe in Bristol's multi-level governance. Firstly from a conceptual perspective, there is a preconceived misfit between the nature of the EU preference for multi-layered and multi-actor governance and that in the traditionally strong centralised British state. From a political view, there is a misfit between EU political norms of cooperation and consensus-seeking and the adversarial style of politics in Britain (Bache 2005). However, other scholars such as Woolfhardt *et al* (2005) have interpreted the pre-existence of partnerships in UK cities as representing a high policy fit thus reducing the adaptational pressure with EU initiatives though they emphasise the significance of pre-existing local arrangements. In their studies of cities across Europe, their research found that in Manchester and Liverpool, the degree of fit differed from that in other member state cities¹². According to Bull & Jones (2006), Bristol represents a "clear case of the new governance" (2006:768).

At the local level, Bristol is undergoing a transition period in regard to European engagement, with a number of important personnel changes at the City Council, most notably the appointment of a new Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. In addition, the wind-down of some major European urban initiatives in the city (e.g. URBAN2) together with the national regional review and the handover of funding decisions to the South West Regional Development Agency. These changes and the absence of a contemporary

¹¹ Five of the city's 34 wards are in the worst 10% nationally. Some of the most deprived wards in the country are located in Bristol, namely St Paul, Lawrence Hill and Filwood in South Bristol and opportunities to escape are socially selective (Atkinson & Helms, 2007:5). Clifton in the north of the city is considered the wealthiest and most affluent area of the city and the level of polarisation between north and south is considered to be increasing, Bassett, 2001; Boddy, 2003; Lambert and Smith, 2003)

¹² Wolfhardt *et al* (2005) conducted a study on the level of Europeanization at the urban level and formed their conclusions on the basis of 'inertia' (cities resist change), 'absorption' (cities incorporate change), 'accommodation' (cities adapt to change) and 'transformation' (cities replace policies etc). They concluded that Liverpool and Manchester (the only UK cities they researched) absorb change, unlike Graz where they found that cities replaced institutions and Vienna, Dortmund and Hamburg, which they found accommodated change.

research into the Bristol City governance structure represent a window of opportunity at a pivotal time for the role of Europe in Bristol's multi-level governance.

Marshall (2005) notes that Europeanization would be 'distinctly more difficult to investigate' in wealthier cities such as London, Paris or Milan, than recipient cities [such as Bristol] citing inconsistent involvement with EU programmes and the reduced likelihood of institutions facing adaptation pressures seen in beneficiary cities (2005:673). Policy transfer, identified as an important element of Europeanization has greater potential in cities, which benefit from a high presence of supranational interaction with Brussels officialdom (Marshall, 2005).

Finally, although there is similar research in relation to other cities in the UK, there is a notable absence of articles in respect of Bristol and the South West UK. In addition to the questions raised in the literature review, these reasons provide strong justification for Bristol to be a case study for this research.

3.3 Data Collection

Semi Structured Interviews

It is considered that a triangulation approach¹³ of data collection types in social and political science often represents the soundest basis for drawing credible conclusions. This research relies on data collected from a series of semi-structured interviews with carefully selected individuals representing an array of organisations from across the urban governance spectrum to ensure credible analysis. In addition, a number of informal but enlightening conversations with individuals involved and familiar with urban policy and governance in Bristol. Alternative methods, (for example questionnaires or focus groups) were discounted due to the complex understanding required in the subject field and the resources available to the researcher. Semi-structured interviews are commonly acknowledged as being the most effective interview type for this type of research as they enable the interviewer to target an interviewees specific expertise or knowledge (Flowerdew and Martin 1997).

The details of each interviewee and the date, time and method of interview for each individual is at Appendix 3.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, the research relied on a number secondary data sources, local newspaper articles and on-line news stations to provide a contextual background to the research.

¹³ Triangulation is a multi-method approach to data collection combining qualitative and quantitative data. This methodological pluralism has been attributed as a test of validity, although this has been criticised (see Bloor, 1997). Furthermore, reliance upon interview data is criticised by who argue that interviewee bias the interviewee answers (Valentine, 1997). This research adopts the humanist (post-structuralist) approach in that objective social science is an oxymoron.

3.4 Data Analysis

The methods used provide qualitative data, which describes meaning rather than drawing statistical inferences. It is thus acknowledged for its validity as opposed to its reliability (Kitchen & Tate, 2000). Manual analysis of the data was preferred to information technology given the researcher's previous experience and the availability of the required computer software¹⁴. Relevant extracts from the interviews were word-processed and colour coded¹⁵ and divided into topic areas relevant to each research objective and whether the quote related to:

- Factual information
- Opinion (suggestion or criticism or anonymous)
- Recommendation for further research.
- Request for anonymous or unrecorded comment

Many of the interviewee quotes are included within the following sections under the relevant sub-heading and referenced accordingly. A transcript of the typed interviewee quotes that were considered to merit word-processing¹⁶ is at Appendix 4.

The following sections incorporate the data analysis and address the identified research objectives.

¹⁴ Krang (1997) explains the pros and cons of using Information Technology (e.g. Textbase Alpha, Atlas-ti, Hyper Qual, Nud.ist etc) for qualitative analysis (1997: 187).

¹⁵ Colour coding was used by the researcher to assist with data analysis. All colour coding has been removed for reader's ease.

¹⁶ It was not considered time efficient to type up all of the interviewee responses. In total there was over 23 hours worth of recorded interviews.

4.0 Bristol Urban Governance Structure

Objective 1: Identify and critically evaluate the interaction between the relevant actors in Bristol's multilevel governance structure

Hypothesis 1: "European engagement encourages a complex institutional setting in Bristol, which limits the efficiency of MLG"

Like other cities in the UK, Bristol has been subjected to a plethora of various national and European led urban regeneration schemes and initiatives aimed at reducing inequality and improving the public realm (Figure 4.0).

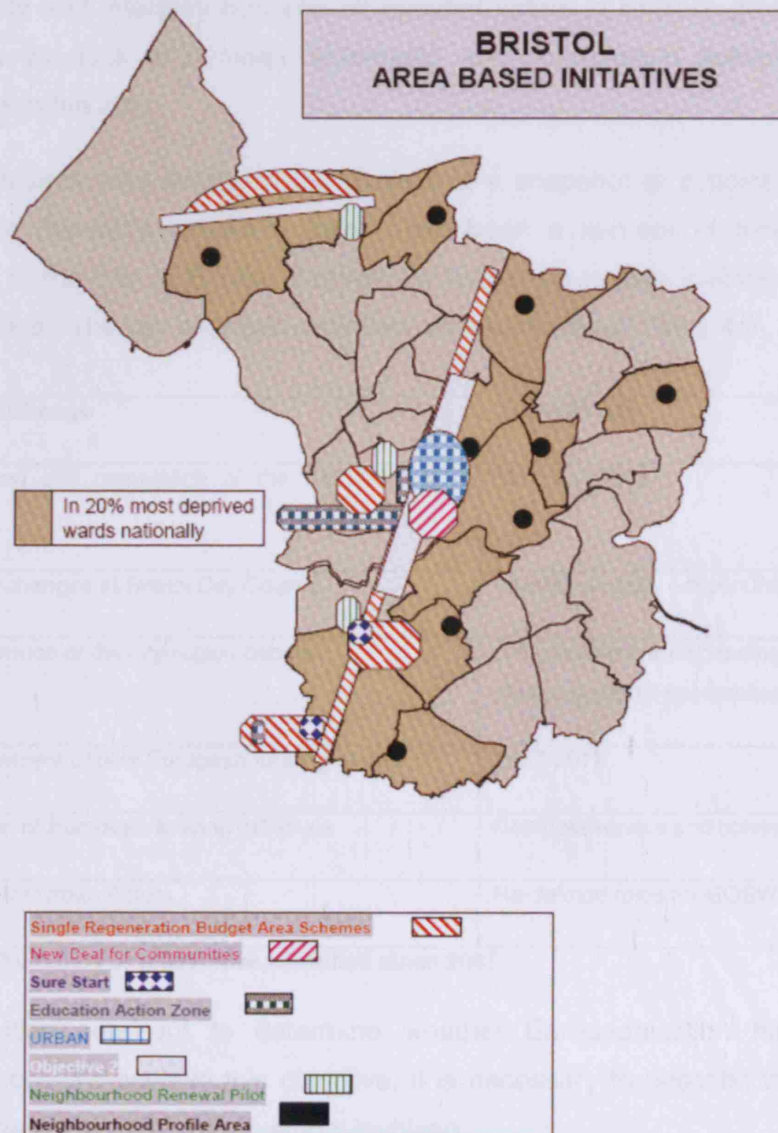


Figure 4.0: Diagram showing the spatial spread of urban initiatives within the administrative boundary of Bristol (Source: Stewart 2001).

Managing these initiatives in an efficient and complimentary manner has led to a proliferation of institutional structures at different spatial scales, providing the city with logistical challenges for the new urban governance. In parallel to these challenges has been the government's 'New Local Government Agenda' with an emphasis on partnership and "network governance" (Rhodes, 1997). Bristol adopted a pluralist approach comprising many actors to achieve the dual goal of democratic renewal and greater efficiency of outcomes (Bull & Jones, 2003). However, the city's response to these changes and challenges has been widely criticised, with commentators pointing to fragmentation and overly complex patterns of urban governance (Stewart, 2001; Tallon, 2007:86). Professor Murray Stewart, an experienced scholar on the subject of urban governance, and a former professor at University West of England (UWE) in Bristol, points specifically to the complexity and interplay between all relevant actors in Bristol's governance. Stewart also criticises the lack of strategic leadership and coordination between each of the urban initiatives in the city.

Stewart's work was written in the context of a snapshot at a point in time (2001). Since Professor Stewart's research, there have been a number of milestones and changes, relevant to the role of Europe that require further up-to-date investigation of Bristol's urban governance. The key changes identified are summarised (Table 4.0).

Aspect of Change	Time/Change
The running and completion of the URBAN I & II initiatives	1999 and 2006
Personnel changes at Bristol City Council	Notable recently – New Chief Executive
The furtherance of the city-region debate	UK government disbanding the idea of democratically elected regional assemblies
Commencement of new European funding period	2007-2013
Introduction of European funding initiatives	Competitiveness and cohesion funding streams
New roles for Urban Actors	Re-defined roles for GOSW and SWERDA

Table 4.0 Summary of milestones identified since 2001

This section sets out to determine whether Europeanization has affected the city's governance. To achieve this objective, it is necessary to describe the existing institutional map of the city and the urban actors involved.

4.1 Institutions of the City Region

Figure 4.1 shows the complexities of institutional map of Bristol which illustrates how each body relates to one (see Appendix 2 for acronym definitions). It is important to note that the absence of a line linking URBAN I and II to any institutional body or organisation. This point, that European programmes and governance structures are detached, is picked up on elsewhere in the research (5.1.2).

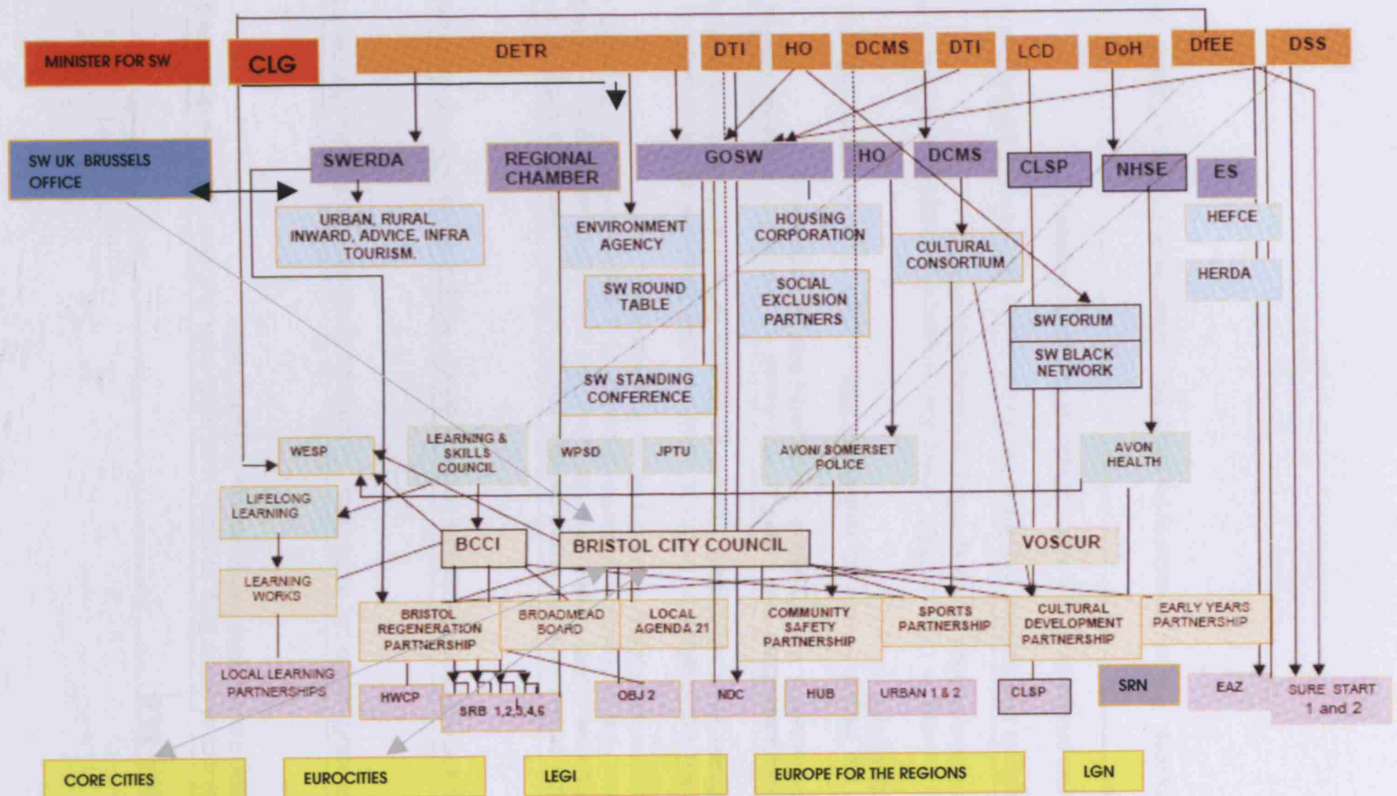


Figure 4.1: Institutional map of Bristol (adopted from Stewart 2001).

The purpose of figure 4.1 is simply to illustrate the complex and cluttered nature of the city's governance structure. With so many actors, the concentration of power could be considered diluted. However, analysis of the interviewees suggests that the most significant powerful actors remain the national government, and particularly the treasury:

"The Treasury, which of course holds the purse strings, remains very powerful in dictating how things are run" (Interviewee 2)

Table 4.1 describes the role of selected urban actors.

Table 4.1: Summary descriptions of the main urban actors in Bristol

Urban Actor	Specific players	Role in Bristol's MLG
European Commission	DG REGIO, DG BUDG, DG COMM, DG DEV, DG EAC, DG EMPL, DG TREN, DG ENTR, DG ENV, ¹⁸	The most relevant of these DGs to urban level MLG form European policy and devise programmes with the input from national government and transnational networks e.g. EUROCITIES.
National Government	CLG, DBERR, DCMS,	Dictate the structure of the city institutions. Coordinate European money and channel it through the chosen body – currently the RDA.
Voluntary Sector	VOSCUR, Bristol Partnership	Wide ranging and established voluntary sector in Bristol. VOSCUR has over 700 organisation members (VOSCUR Website)
Business Sector	Business Leaders and urban elites	<p>The role of the private sector in Bristol remains strong, with business elites vying for a leading role in shaping the city's future. Keith Basset's work (1996) emphasised the role of the urban elites as filling in a political vacuum. However, since New Labour came to power, the proliferation of partnerships has to a degree dislodged the urban elites more, in spite of a relatively high interest in commercial property in the city centre (Interviewee 9)</p> <p>The role of the urban elites in Bristol is currently being reviewed as the Council is undertaking a business transformation programme (Interviewee 10) and will enhance partnership rather than departments pushing their own agenda (Interviewee 10).</p>
Minister for the South West Region	Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP	<p>Ambiguous role/unidentified role – neither interviewee nor secondary research showed any current active role for the regional minister (Interviewees 6, 9 & 10) despite its 'powerful title' (Interviewee 9).</p> <p>"Minister for the Region – quite an ambiguous role. I don't know what their influence. It sounds a powerful title – but it's a mystery!" (Interviewee 9).</p> <p>There was a meeting in October 2007, where Ben Bradshaw addressed members of the Regional Assembly, although there is limited evidence/knowledge of any specific involvement beyond this.</p>
South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWERDA)	Competitiveness and Cohesion Units	<p>Allocating budgets and deciding projects to be funded, based on a new competitiveness strategy (Interviewee 4)</p> <p>Drive economic prosperity for the region (Regional Economic Strategy)</p>

¹⁸ The European Commission comprises individual Directorates relevant to each policy area. They are preceded by the letters 'DG' – which stands for Director General. Each Directorate is at Appendix 2.

Government Office for the South West (GOSW)			<p>Role has changed from being a regional presence for various government departments to one that is more strategic and less about delivering government grant schemes and initiatives. GOSW role is now a more strategic role that challenges other stakeholders to deliver the Government's agenda (Interviewee 2)</p> <p>"The GO are a significant player – probably less so now in the new funding period, but they were very significant in the transition period. There role has changed now" (Interviewee 2)</p>
South West England Regional Assembly (SWERA)			<p>Role reduced following the phasing out of Regional Assemblies since the Government's restructuring of the way regions are governed. To be disbanded and amalgamated in to the RDA.</p>
Bristol City Council (BCC)	City Council Departments		<p>Administer and coordinate city level services – e.g. Waste, education, health, transport etc.</p> <p>Have had the role of programme manager removed and replaced by the SWERDA.</p>
Bristol Partnership			<p>The Bristol Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership and comprises leaders from across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to develop a shared vision for Bristol, and to secure delivery of our ambitions for the city and its communities. Members include key public agencies, businesses, sub-regional partners and voluntary and community sector organisations (Bristol Partnership)</p> <p>According to one interviewee, "the advent of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), and various subgroups has helped pulled together and better coordinate delivery activities in the city which has been positive thing" (interviewee 9)</p> <p>Interviewee 9 attributes the creation of LSPs to European influence and how they provide a coordinated approach to urban initiatives. However, Boddy et al (2003) note "there is a widely perceived tension between the role of the City Council and the LSP" (2003: 65). It is understood that the role of the LSP, called the Bristol Partnership, is in a state of flux, and at the time of writing, it is reported that a report is due to be presented to the City Cabinet clarifying the role of the LSP in Bristol (Robin Kidson, <i>pers comm</i>).</p> <p>Marshall (2005) notes that Bristol has had huge difficulty developing strong partnerships and integrated regeneration programmes (2005: 682).</p>

The presence of these organisations, each with varying responsibility accords with the multi-level governance theory that it is not one organisation responsible for governing. There is a shared level of responsibility, with each organisation having its own remit. It is this level of pluralism that limits that in theory limits the dominance of any single group or small coalition of actors (Rosenau, 2004), and suggests the presence of European encouraged type II multi-level governance (Bache, 2005) referred to in section 1.4.

4.2 Devolved City Structure and City Leadership

The manner in which each institution interacts is an important factor in determining the effectiveness of the city's governance. The state of city governance and the interaction between each institution and organisation has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of Europe at the urban level.

Analysis of the governance structure in Bristol provides interesting results with inconsistencies between interviewee responses with a distinctive pattern emerging. Generally, interviewees speaking from the European context, i.e. those without a day to day knowledge of Bristol spoke favourably of the Bristol governance structure. However, those involved at the more local level with a day-to-day role in Bristol's governance were generally more critical, particularly in regard to strategic leadership:

"There have been a number of changes in Bristol in recent years. A dozen years ago there was not strong vertical leadership, does not have a political party in overall control, NOC in the city administrated" (Interviewee 1).

A City Council employee commented that:

"One of Bristol's problems is the way it was managed – the structure of the Council" (Interviewee 10)

The quote's passive tone is explained that the Council's current re-structuring process. The implications of this re-structuring would become apparent later in 2008, following a City Council evaluation into the city's governance structure (due 25th September 2008 – Robin Kidson *pers comm.*). This restructuring process was considered to be a result of recent staff changes at the Council, with the introduction of Helen Holland and Jan Ormandroyd as the new Leader of Council and Chief Executive respectively (Interviewee 6). The significance of individual characters and personalities in forward thinking was a point referred to by interviewees throughout the research.

However, opinions from interviewees at the European and national level differed quite significantly. In terms of the overall governance, one interviewee suggested that:

“In terms of European funding – Bristol they have got the most devolved structures that hasn’t been replicated in other UK cities” (Interviewee 9).

The above quote reflects the views of others from outside the immediacies of Bristol’s governance. Although at first this appears to constitute praise for Bristol, this view requires deeper analysis and explanation, as it is possible to interpret this statement in a number of ways.

- 1/ Firstly it implies that a devolved structure is the preferable mode of governance, a view supported by the government in the White Paper entitled “Communities in Control” (CLG 2008). In a recent cabinet report, Bristol City Council note the realisation that evidence from Europe and North America suggests a necessary condition of economically successful cities is a wide degree of freedom for those cities to determine their own destinies (Bristol City Council Executive Briefing Neighbourhoods 14th August 2008). It is argued that a devolved structure is only preferable where the city governance is sufficiently competent¹⁹

The incompetency of the local level is an issue referred to by a City Council Official, who bemoaned that

“At the City Council there is a lack of knowledge at officer level” (anon)

This lack of knowledge combined with the lack of city leadership, particularly in the late 1990s-early 2000s, could explain the missed opportunities in Bristol for a coordinated approach to European programmes. The Bristol URBAN Programme Manager commented that:

“...it is a real shame that the benefits of the URBAN initiative were not part of a wider plan for the city”. (Interviewee 3)

Whilst another interviewee commented that:

¹⁹ Marshall (2005) poses that ‘unlike their continental counterparts, British local authorities lack constitutional standing, possess relatively few competencies, and are subject to restrictive *ultra vires* rule which prevents them from taking action outside those responsibilities granted to them by the UK Parliament (2005: 674).

"The EC guidelines for structure funds from 1999 said all European money to be spent in urban areas had to be spent in the context of an integrated strategy for the whole urban area; widely ignored as Bristol never produced one!" (Interviewee 6)

This comment supports the findings of Professor Stewart back in 2001 who stated that:

"ABIs [in Bristol are]– scattered geographically from north to south possess no structure which allows them to relate one to the other and still less a structure which encourages lessons from area-based experience to feed into main programmes" (2001:18)

and:

"The conclusions from Bristol are clear. There is a fragmented and complex system of partnerships without the protocols which might make joined up working more practicable. There is an absence of strategic leadership which could give shape to the direction of such partnerships, and there is no integrating civic leadership to offer direction to the variety of programmes in the city across the city" (2001:17).

Professor Stewart's conclusions are supported by the interviewee responses, illustrating that there had been little progress in the last 7 years. The lack of action highlights the weak ties between governance and the city's academic institutions, a relationship identified as not meeting the potential as it does in other UK cities (Interviewee 10). It is therefore suggested that a devolved urban structure is only desirable where there is a coordinated approach to urban politics supplemented by widespread knowledge of European programmes amongst key decision makers and urban actors.

- 2/ Secondly, though it may be true that Bristol's devolved structure has not been replicated in other UK cities, it may be the case that UK cities generally do not have a devolved structure generally:

"cities for example [in the UK] are different to those in the Netherlands, where on paper there is a centralised government and not so strong regions and

municipalities but I'd say that Dutch cities have greater devolved power and more influence on urban policy than in the UK" (Interviewee 7)

This view suggests that cities in centralised member states *can* have a strong role in forming urban policy. The dichromatic view that it is either strong cities or strong nation states needs to be addressed. On this issue, a Policy Officer for EUROCITIES commented that:

"...so we are moving away from a flat multi-level governance scheme to something more complex resembling a tri-dimensional matrix with multiple actors, operating at different levels and getting involved in different parts of the process. This is a very big challenge since time is a key factor for an efficient governance system" (Interviewee 13).

There needs to be a paradigm shift to establish that governance is an intra-dependant phenomenon rather than vertical or hierarchical, as commented on by a senior CLG consultant:

"I think the idea of a governance system that isn't just horizontal or vertical is valid- if you look at the dynamics of what goes on in successful places – it is a result of process factors – networks, leadership and the presence of key actors who can access cash. Those are the criteria for cities who want to perform at a European scale" (Interviewee 9)

There needs to be a move away from the confrontational urban politics that inhibits urban governance in Bristol.

One issue that arose from this research is recognition of the fact that these changes (i.e. the role of Europe) occurred in a relatively short space of time, and Europeanization can therefore be considered a gradual process; i.e. Bristol needs to play 'catch-up' (Interviewee 10). When interviewees were asked, "who governs the city?" the responses were enlightening. One interviewee emphasised the temporal dimension to the evolution to MLG and acknowledged the scope of the MLG concept to explain the Bristol situation:

"Who actually governs Bristol? The title of your study answers this point! MLG is something that happens over time; The CC does not govern Bristol. Many of the city developments are impacted by Private business involvement. Much of the harbour development is private money. The question of who governs is highly complex which

is why the concept of MLG is a very valid one as it helps understand the dynamic of what goes on at the city level” (Interviewee 9)

Whereas another argued that:

“I would say Bristol CC governs Bristol, though other people may say something else! However, in some areas, we don’t have enough power” (Interviewee 10)

This research suggests that at the urban level, the governance structure is complex and in flux. It is however, perplexing that the interaction of Bristol’s urban actors is admired so by those who work from Europe.

4.3 The Role of the Nation State

It is commonly accepted that complex governance systems such as that identified in Bristol are slow and use excessive resources. The number of organisations involved in Bristol’s multi-level governance and the lack of strategic leadership identified creates problems for how European schemes are adopted. Restructuring and streamlining the number of actors and their roles could enhance the efficiency of the city’s governance, but in centralised UK, the power is confined to Whitehall. When asked whether Europe had a role in this, interviewee 7 commented that:

“If member states set up very complex systems with many bodies, we cannot do anything to change this – that is beyond the scope of the EU. We can present arguments but there is no legal basis for us to bring change.” (Interviewee 7)

The legal basis for changes rests with the national government, and ultimately it is they who decide how governance structures are formed, thus highlighting the power retention of national government John (1996). Halpern (2004) notes how the European Union (EU) has the capacity to institute major policy changes through Community Initiatives at national and local levels, “depending on the way the national levels manage the programmes developed by the EU” (2004: 697). A prime example of this is the role of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), which have taken over the managing of urban level European funding programmes in the UK. This change is one of many changes in the role of different institutions in Bristol’s MLG, inflicted by national government policy, and possibly in response to the European ideology of a greater role for the regions.

4.4 The role of other urban actors

Ian Hill, an independent consultant to CLG, considers that the European structure funds in the late 1980s led to significant changes in the UK:

“... for example local strategy partnerships, neighbourhood renewal, Local Economic Growth Initiative (LEGI) have started to put more emphasis on locality (or territory in European jargon) which is the level below the region and this effects how you deliver urban programmes at the local level. Cities have adapted their structures to cope with the delivery of Euro structure funds... a direct European influence.” (Interviewee 9)

A European Officer for GOSW, (Interviewee 2) explains that the role of other bodies in Bristol's MLG has changed in recent years:

“The role of GOSW has changed in recent years from being a regional presence for various government departments to one that is more strategic and less about delivering government grant schemes and initiatives. Our role now is now a more strategic role that challenges other stakeholders to deliver the Government's agenda”. (Interviewee 2)

On the basis of the findings of this research, this changing role puts challenges on the government office on the basis of finding so of this research. In its prior role, there was scope to engage in Europe cross-cutting various sectors. However, now that it is more of arm to national government, there is a view that its European involvement could be reduced as it has been identified that the governments agenda is not European focused.

These views suggest that the existing number of actors could be excessive and actually slows down governance, and does not necessarily promote the best strategy of tackling Bristol's urban issues. The view from this objective mirrors that of Professor Stewart's work in terms of programmes, i.e. that the existing governance structure in Bristol is saturated and outdated and is not conducive to the delivery of effective European urban policy.

Reducing the number of players is one issue that would allow more effective governance, but there also needs to be clarity on the role of the regions. Each interviewee commented on the role of regional government in the UK and the amount of time it has taken for national clarification being a constant issue. The overwhelming consensus was that greater

devolved power to the regions would allow more effective government, and would enable greater European involvement that would advantage cities such as Bristol.

Interviewee 2 argues that:

“There should be more power to the regions and we need to decentralise back to local authorities - with the amount of organisations involved there is inevitably too much overlap and this complicates governance of the region and its cities”
(Interviewee 2)

The barriers to this utopian view are largely associated with the role of the government and specifically the *“unwillingness of the treasury to let go”* (interviewee 6) and are explained in the following chapter. This is an example of where the national government holds particular power. The national review of regions and sub-regions may help to an extent, although as with all changes of this magnitude, its impact will take time to take effect.

4.5 Summary

Hypothesis 1 has been shown to be true, and the governance structure in Bristol is considered to be overly complex, creating institutional saturation. This has been accentuated by the involvement of many players required in European programmes, supporting the proposition by Marshall (2005) that “Europeanization, far from reducing local fragmentation, actually serves to accentuate it, prompting the development of more urban partnerships, widening the number of participants involved in decision making and encouraging greater multi-level interaction territorial interaction (2005:673).

5.0 The Added Value of Europe at the Urban Level

Objective 2: Critically assess the added value of European initiatives in Bristol from a governance perspective

Hypothesis 2: European Urban Initiatives have had limited added value on the cities governance

One of the main arguments for European involvement at the urban level is the added value that it brings to city governance (Bache, 2005). Added Value in this context is viewed as “something which has been enabled, or which could not have been done without Community Assistance” (Batchler & Taylor, 2003: 7). Proponents of European funding at the urban level consider that Europe brings more than just additional funding, and allows innovative ways of overcoming urban problems based on the experience of other EU member states (Interview JM). The EC has identified four main areas of added value of structural funds (Batchler & Taylor, 2003):

- 1) The achievement of community objectives related to economic and social cohesion, implementation of EC priorities of a transnational character, and the desire to promote balanced and sustainable development within the EU.
- 2) Mobilisation of community resources to have a significant redistributive effect, an additional character as compared to the financial effort of member states, and a guarantee of maximum leverage effects – particularly on the private sector.
- 3) The method of implementation of structural funds – specifically partnership, programming control, monitoring and evaluation.
- 4) Co-operation and networking, knowledge transfer and sharing best practice and pooling resources.

However, there are many academics and politicians who are critical of the role that Europe has and whether the added value merits European intervention. For some, urban issues are a national problem and should be tackled through domestic initiatives. The UK government itself recently called for a repatriation of EU funding as it did not see the merit in ‘giving money to Europe only to receive it back again with conditions attached’ (Interviewee1).

The European turn of cities referred in the introduction culminated in the rise of Community Based Initiatives (CBIs), which were effectively small area based initiatives (ABIs) aimed at involving local communities in the implementation process. This resulted in Europe’s first

targeted urban based initiative, “URBAN I”, followed by “URBAN II” (see Appendix 3). Although the URBAN programme, an area based initiative targeted at the most deprived urban areas in the EU, had a relatively small budget in the context of European funding initiatives, it did mark a recognition by the EU that it had to increase its roll in European cities (Colomb, 2007). Details of the European programmes in Bristol are described at Appendix 3.

It is argued that Bristol, like other UK cities, has been the recipient of a plethora of initiatives, each intended to reduce spatial equality in the city, and which contributed to the tensions and problems identified in section 1 of this research²⁰. The added value of European ABIs therefore needs to be considered against the UK’s long history of ABIs which the government have recently been trying to rationalise and reduce the number of individual area based initiatives (Interviewee 1).

Interviewees were questioned over what they perceived to be the added value of a European dimension to urban issues in Bristol, in the context of the element identified. It is important to consider that ‘added value’ is a complex concept and is open to subjectivity and may be interpreted in different ways by actors from different levels of the political spectrum, as demonstrated by the varied interviewee responses on the subject. This research considers added value in the context of:

- **Operational**
- **Political**
- **Cohesiveness**
- **Policy**
- **Learning**
- **Cultural**

This research considers it important to avoid isolating the role of Europe in terms of purely structural funds, or specific programmes and this approach is supported by interviewee 9:

“You can’t look at Europe’s role as different streams in isolation” (Interviewee 9)

Membership of the European Union is more than these, and it is argued that there should be more research into the added value of Europe collectively at the urban level (structural funds, transnational networks, targeted schemes, twinning initiatives etc). For the purposes

²⁰ Tallon (2007) warns of a ‘funding fatigue, as problem communities are involved in successive funding bids (2007:85), often with limited success (Bassett, 2001).

of this research, the issue of operational added value in terms of governing structures is considered in depth. However, the issue of governance is related to the other five added values categories and therefore each issue merits investigation.

5.1 Operational Added Value (Governance)

The operational added value is assessed in terms of partnerships, devolution of city governance structures and consequent institutional change.

5.1.1 Partnership

Arguably the most frequently referred to element of added value of Europe in terms of governance is partnership. Commonly perceived benefits of partnership include:

- Vertical coherence;
- Collaborative working;
- Greater involvement of local actors; and
- Improved cooperation and management of economic development initiatives.

Carpenter (2006) concluded that the URBAN programme created added value in respect of its impact on urban governance, *“by creating conditions for change in the future, in terms of building partnerships and trust between members, developing local capacity, and introducing innovative approaches to doing and managing urban regeneration, both at the local and in some cases national level”* (Carpenter 2006: 2159).

The interviewee responses obtained through this research vary and the overall added value of Europe in terms of its effect on Bristol’s governance is inconclusive. According to one City Council Official, the URBAN initiative was:

“in some ways just another area based initiative but, one of the requirements for urban community initiatives, is that they are controlled by a partnership group representing stake holders communities and a wide variety of agencies, which has not always been the case for ABIs in the UK. Arguably it is another ABI, but it did enshrine to some extent, the concept of being delivered or managed by local partnerships” (Interviewee 1 authors own emphasis).

This suggests that URBAN led the way in Bristol in terms of its focus on partnership delivery, as urban deprivation had previously been addressed by single agencies (e.g. Unitary Development Corporations) through physical improvements to the city’s deprived areas. However, concern was raised over the number of partnerships established:

“In some ways we have too many partnerships, and to some extent it is the usual suspects who attend them.” (Interviewee 1).

The excessive proliferation of partnerships has recently been recognised by the Council, who are now examining the role and structure of the Bristol Partnership (The Local LSP).

5.1.2 Institutional Change

Bristol has received widespread praise for the way it managed the URBAN initiative and for the way it involved a cross section of the local community, especially young people, with some of those involved being as young as 8 (interviewee 3). However, the success of an individual project does not necessarily transcend into mainstream policy. A GOSW official praised the URBAN II initiative commenting that:

“URBAN II in south Bristol was quite unique and innovative in terms of its involvement of young people in the management of the programme – and that went as far as involving them in the decision making process around which projects to approve for funding.” (Interviewee 2)

The ability to manage the programme at the local level and the degree of autonomy held by the programme manager were considered to be factors that enabled the success of the URBAN initiative in Bristol:

“ I think that it was super that URBAN was managed locally, because as a Council, you know where the money needs to go [in Bristol].” (Interviewee 3)

Regarding the potential for this to be incorporated into mainstream UK policy, interviewees showed caution that the lessons from URBAN, namely the involvement of young people should not be lost. Comments on the ‘legacy’ of URBAN appeared to be more of in hope than expectation:

“the lessons [from URBAN] should not be lost, and should be used to inform national policy and show case to CLG through URBACT” (Interviewee 2, author’s emphasis)

“ CLG have been trying to get some of the ideas mainstreamed into domestic programmes and of course through the URBACT Programme south Bristol has been successful in sharing some of its good practice with other European Urban areas. The evaluation of the Urban Programme will hopefully provide further opportunities to show case its achievements” (Interviewee 2, author’s emphasis)

“URBAN had achieved the balance very well, and really has planted the seed, but it remains for the sustainable communities agenda to learn from URBAN - this may be happening but much too slowly” (Interviewee 2, author’s emphasis)

However, there are additional lessons were identified by interviewee 10, who concurred that there is:

“some sort of urban legacy [URBAN2], but we could have done better, and could have influenced European policy a lot more, but due to a gap in staffing, so Bristol CC didn’t pull their weight” (Interviewee 10)

This view suggests that in order to gain maximum added value of European programmes from a governance perspective, there needs to be a base line understanding of what’s involved and the resources required to gain maximum benefit.

In terms of what has actually happened and the legacy, interviewee responses did not provide any conclusive evidence to suggest that the city structure had been permanently altered as a result of European intervention, and initiatives were pigeon holed from conventional governance structures:

“In the Bristol context, programme implementation is like a subset of city governance. You have government structures but they are government structures which are tasked to for specific areas. It is not city governance in precise terms of Europeanization. You have to differentiate between programme implementation and city governance” (Interviewee 9, author’s emphasis)

This quote is very interesting, as it separates programme implementation from city governance, which differs from the situation in Glasgow and Birmingham, where Marshall concluded that “European working has been mainstreamed within Birmingham and Glasgow City Councils 92005: 676). In Bristol, the long-term added value of Europeanization from an institutional perspective appears to be limited, based on the evidence from this research, and appears more limited to programmes and individuals who worked on the programmes, as acknowledged by the European Programme Manager for URBAN in Bristol:

“...It’s not about a change in the structure, it’s about the change in the people- I really believe in the personal background – which is very good in Bristol” (Interviewee 11).

5.1.3 Devolved Structure

The added value in terms of Europe’s impact on influencing a devolved structure in Bristol was arguably the most contentious issue raised in this research, with interviewees giving a range of opinions, highlighting the subjective nature of the topic:

“I don’t think EU Programmes have much if any impact on the way the council works”. (Interviewee 2)

Contrasted with:

“The reason the devolved system in Bristol was due to the EU URBAN initiative”
(Interviewee 9)

The latter quote requires further explanation to be put in context. The same interviewee praised the role of the City Council and GOSW in how Bristol has tried to:

“replicate the URBAN model in terms of how they delivered the other structure funds”
(Interviewee 9)

However, the interviewee joined others in their concern that the successes of URBAN and the devolved structure it championed could be lost through the new structure policy programme period, where the onus has switched away from the urban dimension to a strong regional focus²¹.

5.2 Political Added Value

According to one interviewee, the URBAN initiative was a scheme that enabled ‘*things to get done*’ (Interviewee 1). The lack of political influence in the implementation of urban enabled it to ‘*get on with it without huge amounts of political interference*’ (Interviewee 3). This lack of political interference was referred to several times in each of the interviews, and was generally considered to be a key aspect of added value associated with European led urban initiatives. There is a view therefore that there is an advantage in that European programmes are ‘apolitical’. However, in an era of global terrorism, global warming, climate change and economic instability, there is a prospect that this could lead to urban issues falling further down the European hierarchy. This raises the point that should the European urban agenda receive less focus, then cities’ futures would become reliant on national government input. Recently the UK government caused a stir within the EU, when it suggested repatriation of EU structural funds, as it considered there was little merit in giving money to Europe only to be given it back with conditions attached on how to spend it (Interviewee 1).

“With domestic schemes on the other hand there is always the danger that they can be more driven by politics. This was one of the reasons why the desire of the Treasury to repatriate EU funding was not welcomed by many people” (Interviewee 1)

Interviewees referred other aspects of political added value, highlighting the lengthy duration of structural funds offering a 7-year planning horizon which is:

²¹ For the 2007-2013 Funding period, the Regional Development Agency (in the case of Bristol, SWERDA) are the appointed programme manager for allocating European funds.

“...unknown in UK policy terms and the consequent security that comes with the programmes is significant”. (Interviewee 9)

This advantage is one that is not generally documented, but is important in strategy terms, and allows urban actors to look longer term.

Also in regard to the added value of Europe, the matter of openness of policy makers and their willingness to pilot schemes was considered an advantage of European schemes compared to national schemes as shown by the following quotes:

“Policy formulation in Brussels is a lot more open than it is in Whitehall. For example if you want to ring up an EC official, you just look up their name on the web and call them. It’s much easier to deal with people from the EC and they are always very willing to engage with stakeholders. I am not saying its perfect – but it’s far more accessible than UK policy formulators. The EC likes to metaphorically fly kites – e.g. 4th EC report effectively the beginning of a dialogue – they put forward all sorts of ideas out to test the water – [which is] an effective way of using the networks out there to comment.”
(Interviewee 9)

I think cities feel as though they have more access to European institutions than to national ones. In the UK it is very political – there isn’t the same opportunity. Core cities respond to national policy consultation, where as EUROCITIES has a more open dialogue”. (Interviewee 9)

The potential for political added value is considered to be significant, with local actors supportive of the reduced political involvement characterised by European schemes.

5.2.3 Cohesiveness

In Bristol, interviewee 1 suggested that ABIs are perhaps limited in their scope to tackle the root of deprivation and address socio-economic cohesion. Though they may be used to up skill and train residents, it is often the case that once they are able, they move out of the area to elsewhere in the city, thereby creating a pool of deprivation (Interviewee 1). From this point of view, it appears that the role of ABIs is limited in tackling the root causes of deprivation, and there needs to be a balancing act between people and places based ABIs and also with the larger economic initiatives. The UK government claim that *“it is not clear that the use of structural funds adds significant value in comparison to domestic initiatives”* (Batchler & Taylor, 2003:4). This is in contrast to other member states, especially new members where such approaches to cohesion are not mature and the concept of integrated

working is not common practice (Interviewee 7) for example in Greece (Chorianopoulos, 2002) or Italy (Tedesco 2007).

5.3 Policy

There is debate as to whether the community approach encouraged by URBAN, was already on the national urban agenda, and therefore whether the 'policy' aspect of added value can be attributed to European intervention. One interviewee commented that:

"I don't think UK policy was changed explicitly – not a direct learning across from one to the other – it was more a case of the paradigm had shifted – policy was drifting in that direction anyway" (Interviewee 9, author's emphasis).

It is clear that New Labour rhetoric supported the participatory governance at the time URBAN was initiated.

There was a belief amongst several interviewees that lessons learned from the success of individual projects were a very different thing from becoming part of policy. There needs to be a distinction between 'policy transfer', where lessons learnt from a programme are built into the policy process and 'policy transfer potential', where lessons are identified, but are not followed up or implemented. The interviewees at the city level demonstrated concern that the lessons will not be implemented due to the RDA preference for large scale projects, following their new role in allocating European funds. If lessons are not implemented, then the longer-term added value of European projects is reduced, as highlighted by the quote:

"EU schemes enable more to be done than would otherwise be done. EU funding is independent of HM Treasury, so this allows greater flexibility in delivery for example projects can include sustainability and IT schemes etc.... So the delivery of EU funding is in a sense independent of domestic politics, although it does have to be delivered in line with national and regional strategies, which should in any event be aligned with the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas"²² (Interviewee 1)

In a context of persistent spatial inequality in Bristol, the URBAN Initiative acknowledged the specificity of urban issues and ran in parallel with national government programmes. It offered an opportunity to test an alternative approach to the deprived areas of St Pauls with the role for young people and it provided the platform for potential reorganisation of policy on

²² The Lisbon Agenda was aimed at promoting the knowledge economy, whilst the Gothenburg agenda promotes sustainability (see appendix 5)

a territorial basis, for renewed cooperation between the private, public and voluntary sectors, and for a transformation of the regulatory activities of the state. However, the long term ability to have a legacy on the city governance and to provoke profound institutional change in national urban policies is debatable. When questioned upon this, interviewees consensus appeared to be, that very little is actually happening and if it is, then it is a very slow process, and could result in the loss of its special character.

As mentioned previously Urban has now been mainstreamed into Convergence and Competitiveness, but the fear is it will lose its uniqueness²³. But we shall see.”
(Interviewee 2)

5.4 Learning Added Value

Learning is considered to be a fundamental element of European funding programmes (Interviewee 7). All of the interviewees appeared to support the in principal role of the EU in promoting innovation:

“Europe drives new approaches that you don’t get in national policy (e.g. community economic regeneration is the best example – e.g. URBAN and concentration on knowledge economy – such initiatives never used to be national mainstream thinking.” (Interviewee 4)

The same interviewee considered that Europe maintained an active role in innovation and commented that:

“the EU are still driving policy – for example on economic impact on climate change”.
(Interviewee 4)

Other interviewees were keen to point to the added value of Europe from a learning perspective commenting that:

“If you look at local authorities – there are various examples of where we have learned from others [Europe]. A good example is waste management. Bristol has a 70% recycling rate – highest in country, and that comes from Europe, because our waste managers went to member states to learn from their waste management practices” (Interviewee 10).

In spite of the perceived added value referred to above, there is a view that in reality, the added value is felt predominantly as a financial resource to supplement the national initiatives, and many comments reflected the traditional view of European programmes:

²³ Post interview note: the reference to ‘uniqueness’ was said in regard to engaging young people.

“it could be seen that European funding is just another funding mechanism on one level to enable local economic objectives to be implemented” (Interviewee 1).

It was acknowledged that many actors have historically seen the role of Europe in purely monetary terms. An official for the SW Government Office stated that:

“The [European] funding adds value to projects that are also receiving funding from domestic (UK) sources. The Economic Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is always meant to be the final piece of the funding package, and in this context it is enabling something happen that would not have been affordable from domestic sources” (Interviewee 2 Authors own emphasis)

Table 5.5 illustrates the perceived added value of Europe at the urban level in regard to Bristol based on the analysis of interviewee responses.

Added Value (type)	Types	Present in Bristol	Example
Cohesion	Reduction in Social/Economic disparities	Not significant at the urban level Urban deprivation and its spatial spread remains largely the same.	None identified
Political	Enhanced visibility of the EU Increased Participation	To an extent/increasing	Increasing involvement in EUROCITIES.
Operational	Institutional arrangements Innovation Practices	Yes, but not consistently. Perception that the positives learned from recent programmes will not be maintained in the 2007-2013 funding period.	Identified for URBAN2 programme and SRN.
Learning/Cultural	Exchange of practical experiences Dissemination of good practice Increased awareness of 'Europe'	Not significant Limited Increasing	Inter-cultural dialogue Twinning

Table 5.5: Summary of the added value of Europe in Bristol

5.5 Summary

The above analysis supports hypothesis 2 that:

“European Urban Initiatives have had limited added value on the city’s governance”

The added value of Europe at the Bristol’s urban level is considered to have been limited. None of the interviewees provided a compelling justification for European involvement in Bristol based on past experience. However, this conclusion is not the end and it is not suggested that Europe cannot provide added value to urban issues. A number of limiting factors, described in the following section illustrate further the complexities and barriers to added value.

In addition to these limitations, it should be borne in mind that the European Union has only been involved in urban issues for little over a decade ensures that it is still in a learning process. The following section describes the factors affecting the added value of Europe in respect of Bristol’s MLG and develops on the issues identified in this section.

6.0 Limiting Factors to added value of Europe in Bristol

Objective 3: Identify factors affecting the added value of Europe to Bristol's urban governance and opportunities for enhancement

Hypothesis 3: Factors affecting the added value are controlled by national government.

This chapter identifies a number of factors limiting and enhancing the level of added value described in chapter 2, and takes into account a number of academic propositions arguing the role of the nation state. For example, Le Gales and Harding, (1998) see the modern European city as a 'player' not to be overwhelmed by the nation state, implying a reduced role for national government. The factors identified are wide ranging and in many cases are particularly subjective. For example, there has long been debate in academia over the role of the national governments and their power to manipulate EU guidelines to suit national objectives (Radaelli, 2004). Some scholars refer to the nation state as the ultimate gatekeeper, where as others consider that their role is being undermined in what has been described as the 'hollowing out' of the nation state (Jessop 1994).

The factors identified in this research are categorised according to whether they are pursuant to Europe, the nation state, and the local level in Bristol.

6.1 EU Level

Factors Identified:

- Bureaucracy
- Administrative burden
- Transnational Networks

6.1.1 Bureaucracy

It is widely acknowledged that EU programmes are tainted by excessive bureaucracy and administrative burdens that have been known to dissuade organisations, particularly smaller community and voluntary groups from applying for much needed funding. Those involved at the urban level acknowledged the burden of administrative work and the resources required to simply manage individual projects. One interviewee, with significant experience of European funding schemes commented that:

“the amount of money that individual programmes have to spend on additional auditing is over and above standards normally expected in the UK- a lot of money is spent on this, which arguably could be diverted to the beneficiaries in the local communities and enterprises”. (Interviewee 1)

It was found that the problem was not uniform across European programmes, and that some programmes were more rigorous than others for example the European Social Fund (ESF) (interviewee 4). However, it was acknowledged that the level bureaucracy was formed on a risk based model and this was due to:

“...a number of publicised scandals over misspent of EU funding in some parts of Europe, which has led understandable to very strict control being imposed by the European commission. Some may argue that the pendulum has swung too far”. (Interviewee 1)

The reference to it going “too far” could be a result of the expansion of Europe eastwards, where audit requirements are not as established or rigorous as in the UK, and are thus more open to corruption. The EC is therefore in a difficult situation of developing a policy suitable for each member state. This is a balancing act that is intrinsic to the EU concept, and is applicable at the level of prescription for individual programmes.

One interviewee, with experience at working at the national, local, European and academic level empathised with the EU and explained that it was often the case that the stringent auditing procedures were there at the request of member states, particularly the more established EU members such as the UK (Interviewee 6). This was also the case in terms of the flexibility for each programme. Although at the local level, the flexibility and consequent autonomy for the programme manager were perceived positively, it is understood that the UK government were not so keen on the flexible approach and showed concern over misspending in other member states. A senior worker for the EU at DG REGIO argued that the European Commission were ‘caught in the middle’ and commented:

“If we [the EC] are too prescriptive, people say the EC doesn’t give us the freedom that we need to develop programmes because their situation is very specific. On the other hand, if we give broad guidelines, people will say “oh we don’t know how to do this”, so people ask for more guidance; we need to strike the balance somewhere and that is what we are here to try and do” (Interviewee 7)

The Commissioner also pointed to the national variation in the level of prescription sought;

“New member states like to have detailed guidance, where as [Established EU] countries like the UK and Scandinavian countries are quite happy generally to not have a descriptive policy”. (Interviewee 7)

The EU principles of cohesion and the need for uniformity across the European programmes ensure that this is an issue that is likely to remain an intrinsic and unavoidable element of EU funding at the urban level.

6.1.2 Administrative burden

In addition to the bureaucratic issues regarding European funding, a number of other less significant but equally frustrating administrative issues for those involved were identified. One interviewee referred to:

“the EU accounting year runs as a calendar year where as for most organisations in the UK it runs from April to March, which causes logistical problems in budgetary terms” (Interviewee 1).

The issue of the financial exchange rate was also mentioned as a problem area, with grants being issued in Euros and spent in pounds sterling though one interviewee conceded that:

“This will remain an issue whilst the UK retains sterling” (Interviewee 1).

The constraints identified at the EU level to effective European implementation of funding initiatives are considered to be intrinsic and largely unavoidable in the immediate future. It is also considered that the constraints identified are not the fault of the European Commission or the city level. The EU has a reputation of excessive bureaucracy, but it is often the case that the national state governments request and lobby for stringent administrative and bureaucratic procedures and they are not necessarily imposed by the EC *per se*.

6.1.3 Transnational Networks and International Relations

One aspect of Europeanization that has only more recently started to gain increased academic attention is the role of transnational networks and the role of cities in Europe (upload Europeanization'). It is argued that the role of transnational networks is to become more important after the reduction of funding in the UK, and the need to ensure that the momentum that has propelled the urban agenda into the EU remit is not lost.

The organisation EUROCITIES has an increasingly significant role in promoting the urban agenda at the European level. EUROCITIES is a lobbying organisation that offers its

members a way of influencing European policy. Active participation in EUROCITIES is therefore seen as an advantage in terms of enhancing city profile and gaining a voice in Europe.

Bristol is a longstanding member of EUROCITIES, and it was interesting to understand the varying perceptions of the role of UK cities and Bristol in particular. Whilst at the local level, interviewees acknowledged the benefit of active engagement in EUROCITIES, they found that in reality benefits were not being maximised (interviewee 9). On the contrary, a EUROCITIES policy officer stated that

“UK local authorities’ interest in Europe is very strong as shown by the number of cities involved in EUROCITIES - and it’s not just that there are a lot of them; UK Cities are particularly known for being actively involved” (Interviewee 13).

Likewise, in terms of twinning, the benefits were perceived as potentially significant, although the current twinning arrangements required a radical overview as the existing objectives, particularly in the case of twinning in the BCC Corporate Plan are not being adhered to (Interviewee 9).

6.2 National Level

Factors identified

- Integration between national and European levels

6.2.1 Integration between national and European levels

It is suggested that a greater alignment between the different schemes would bring a more coordinated strategic approach to the vast array of urban initiatives in the city, and it was found that alignment between urban initiatives was the aim for local level urban actors:

“We always try and align with domestic funding streams, but this is not always possible due to different priorities and timescales. For example SRB and SWERDA funding played a role in delivering URBAN, though they were not aligned as well as we would have hoped, particularly in respect of SWERDA investment”. (Interviewee 1).

However, this issue is one that looks set to reduce following the shakeup of how European funding is delivered:

“With the development of co-financing for the European Social Fund (ESF) and matching at source by the RDA, who are now responsible for the delivery of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in England, the problems of alignment will fade. With these mechanisms it is easier to make sure that projects align and add value to regional economic and employment strategies”. (Interviewee 2)

One way of maximising coordination and reciprocity between programmes would be greater interaction between the relevant actors. Evidence from those involved suggests that although this was desirable, it was not reflected in reality:

“I think there could have been a lot more interaction between the English regions, CLG and Europe across the structural fund programmes, particularly in terms of sharing good practice and discussing mutual problems”. (Interviewee 2)

However, this lack of interaction was not necessarily a criticism of Europe *per se*, as for some specific programmes, the level of interaction was better.

“It was better though with Urban, where there were good mechanisms in place – we had a regional UK network of Urban Programmes and through URBACT experience and good practice could be shared with other urban areas throughout Europe. I guess with Urban due to the small and more intimate nature of the programmes it was easier to do this” (Interviewee 2)

For the larger programmes, such as Objective 2 projects, it was found that the interaction would be harder to achieve:

“Objective2 being much bigger would have been a greater challenge. There are mechanisms through the Co-operation Objective to share good practice amongst the regions of the EU, and the new “Regions for Economic Change” is a sort of fast track initiative that will achieve this more quickly” (Interviewee 2).

The scale of programmes is therefore important in the level of interaction that occurs. It is therefore apparent that with the perceived reduction in small scale European community initiatives (see section 4 of this research) that this interaction could actually be reduced.

The limited interaction in Bristol was seen to reflect the situation in other UK cities. The integration between national and European initiatives was seen as a potentially huge benefit, but not one that had been present in Bristol, thus limiting the effects of both:

“In England EU funding is rather pigeon holed and has not always been delivered in line with national funding streams”(Interviewee 2).

Interviewees frequently contrasted the situation in Bristol and England to that in Wales and Scotland and generally considered that devolution had been a significant factor in differentiating between the role of Europe in English cities to Scottish and Welsh cities:

“In Wales and Scotland there is more integration and probably greater political commitment to things European because the EU context helps to enforce their national distinctiveness within the UK. A good example of this political support I gave was when Rhodri Morgan took time to address a Cooperation Objective Conference in Cardiff, I could not image in a Westminster minister giving the subject such a priority”(Interviewee 2).

This quote emphasises the perceived lack of seriousness given to Europe at the urban level amongst the national government, and a possible reason for the limited integration between national and local initiatives.

6.3 Local Level

Factors identified

- Local Democracy
- Institutional
- Strategic Leadership

6.3.1 Local Democracy

The concern over the duration of local election periods was mentioned by several interviewees as an issue affecting the potential for strategic urban planning and a barrier to Bristol maximising European opportunities. One Council Official commented that:

“The election period is very short, so after a couple of years members are subjected to voting and can be replaced after just 2 years and you have to start from scratch. In other EU countries, the election period is 4 or 5 years and you can do work to prepare people. If this duration was extended, it would really help Bristol – at the moment things just change so quickly and there is little stability” (Interviewee 10)

This issue has previously been identified as a constraint on the city’s strategic vision. If Bristol were to adopt the European approach, then this barrier could be overcome. One Interviewee referred to Montpellier as an example where a City Mayor was elected for

several terms which enabled a long term vision to be seen through (Interviewee 9). The absent relationship between funding allocations and election terms was also given as a reason for restricting a strategic vision, though this is an issue that “*you just have to work around*” (Interviewee 9).

Whilst aligning funding programmes would be nigh impossible (Interviewee 9), increasing the election duration would not be, providing it is given the green light by government, and it is understood that lobbying will increase in this regard. The idea of lengthening election periods is currently being lobbied for by Bristol City Council at the time of writing, which illustrates the active process of urban governance. Should this happen, it could be argued that this would represent an example of a European practice influencing the government as a gatekeeper into change as the UK would fall in line with many other member states.

6.3.2 Institutional

In addition to the factors identified at the European and national level, interviewees commented on the issues at the local level that restricted the role of Europe in Bristol. The main issue identified was the lack of resources, particularly staff.

“The post of European Officer wasn’t filled for a year – there was no European Officer for Bristol! There was therefore not enough lobbying – so Paul [Paul Owens – Bristol Objective 2 Manager] didn’t have enough support”. (Interviewee 10)

“In Bristol, we have just one European officer and therefore no resources to help with applications for transnational funding. [Until recently] There was never any support for youth projects – people in Bristol didn’t even know about them, can you believe that?” (Interviewee 10)

A number of interviewees criticised the co-ordination of the approaches to European programmes in Bristol. One City Council commented that:

“The lack of a co-ordinated approach represents a missed opportunity [in terms of small and large projects].. This was impossible under the old system” (Interviewee 10)

This illustrates the approach to Europe by the City Council, and contributes to its bad reputation as highlighted by the comment:

“Bristol [City Council] has a bad reputation and this is justified – I was shocked when I first started in Bristol and how the departments worked – sometimes against each other and internal competition” (Interviewee 10)

This internal wrangling supports the view of many scholars that Local Authorities are struggling to move away from the silo-mentality that inhibits their effectiveness. However, it was acknowledged that in Bristol, it has not necessarily been an issue of innovation, but more to do with implementation of ideas:

“– they had the right ideas but it’s about delivering these ideas and that’s what the new CEO is trying to change” (Interviewee 10)

As referred to earlier in this research, the role of individuals and their personalities is perceived to be a significant factor in the efficiency of local governance. The newly appointed CEO and Leader of the Council were widely considered to represent a shift in approach at the City Council though some interviewees considered that in terms of Europe, the opportunity may have been missed:

“One or two regions in the UK have developed a European strategy, which try to understand engagement with European project from all angles – they are engaging in programmes and projects, and the strategy tries to say there is much more to it than this – there is engagement and cooperation with European cities and institutions and trade links etc – and I think that if any city tried to take on Richard Cabourn’s challenge of being ‘more European’²⁴ then the European theme needs to be perceived in all aspects of European institutional departments– community partnership in governance terms – not a physical partnership but a whole stakeholder group – you need to have Europeanism engaging with Europe’s institutions and opportunities into all the stakeholders. I suspect that is more prevalent in other EU member states than in the UK – due to really basic things like physical geography – the island mentality. If you live in Brussels, then you just drive over to another county to work” (Interviewee 10).

Another limitation identified was the lack of knowledge amongst Council officers at the City Council and the opportunities presented to Bristol by Europe. One interviewee commented the need for change, commenting that:

“Officers will have to change their way of working [in regard to Europe]” (Interviewee 10)

In terms of programme implementations, the role of URBAN initiative has been documented. Part of the reason that it did not reach maximum potential, is that some local urban actors did not take it seriously as result of its relatively small budget:

²⁴ Interviewee 9 was questioned to what extent Bristol had reacted to Richard Cabourns’ proposition that UK cities needed to become more European (Cabourn, 1998).

“It was disappointing that some of the key delivery organisations in the area did not engage as much as we would have hoped, this was particularly so with organisations like the LSC and RDA, whose attendance at URBAN’s Programme Monitoring Committee was patchy. This perhaps indicated that Urban was not high on their list of priorities.” (Interviewee 2)

Given that the RDA has now taken over as the body allocating European funds, this perceived lack of interest shown, places caution over the future of urban issues.

6.3.3 Strategic Leadership

The issue of strategic leadership was one that has received much attention in the literature on Bristol’s governance structure, particularly in regard to the implementation of European funds (Boddy, 2003; Stewart, 2001). Interviewees considered that although the lack of strategic leadership had been a major issue in the last decade, the recent appointments of the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council signalled the start of a more pro-active approach.

6.4 Other Factors

- Perception of Europe
- Mismatch in Structures

6.4.1 Perception of Europe

The role for Europe in Bristol is found to be constrained to a degree by the national governments unwillingness to embrace Europe as other countries do. Interviewees suggested that this was a result of deep rooted attitude that successive UK governments’ have had to European engagement. Interviewees referred to the “Island mentality” and the cautious approach to accepting change.

Bristol is not often put in the same bracket of Liverpool²⁵, Glasgow, Birmingham, Milan and Barcelona:

“Bristol is in the second division when it comes to being classed as a European City” (Interviewee 9).

However, there is a view that Europe has a role at the urban level to influence public perception, providing it is practiced and reported appropriately and accurately. Each local

²⁵ Bristol unsuccessfully bid to become the European Capital of Culture for 2008, losing out to Liverpool.

actor interviewed conceded that the perception of Bristol as a European city was not comparable to that of other recipient cities in the UK and beyond:

Despite the view that Bristol had not achieved the European city status desired for by local urban actors, there was a consensus that the urban level was well positioned to alter perceptions of Europe,

“There is a role for governance in changing the perception of Europe in the UK- e.g. Glasgow is seen a European city due to urban level European involvement” (Interviewee 9).

Others consider that attributing urban level European involvement to altering perception as being more farfetched:

“It is difficult to say whether our European involvement affects public perception. Though what does surprise me is the level of support for the whole European idea – people are very open and just mentioning the intercultural dialogue – everyone came along and wanted to contribute to the debate” (Interviewee 10).

The above quote suggests that there is active enthusiasm for the European project in the city. This is in a region where generally there is relatively widespread scepticism of Europe; indeed the region has 2 UK Independence Party (UKIP) MEPs and the press regular report stories with a negative Euro-vibe (Interviewee 9). Another interviewee considered that the presence of UKIP was more limited, commenting that:

“I don’t know of any institutions that take the UKIP party seriously. People tend to work around them rather than with them. It is more concerning when mainstream parties try to retrench from European engagement” (Interviewee 10).

Others consider that in Bristol at least, the ability to change perception is possible to a “limited extent”, despite the amount of publicity for European related projects:

“....whilst there has been some understanding, that it has involved European investment has had to play – I wouldn’t say it has been common currency!” (Interviewee 1)

This suggests that in spite of a significant number of EU funded projects in the city it is not well known that Europe has had a significant role. Furthermore, it is not simply a matter of placards with the EU logo on that will encourage changes in public perception. It is the

activities and local involvement that will improve this. Activities such as the innovative intercultural dialogue in Bristol are important in driving this²⁶.

6.4.2 Mismatch in Policy & Political Structures

One limiting factor to a beneficial role for Europe at the urban level is the level of mismatch between policy matters and political structures (Radaelli, 2000; Green Cowles *et al* 2001). Europe has consistently pushed for regions to hold a greater level of power and autonomy. However, England (note *England* and not the UK), is a very centralised state and despite tinkering with the idea of greater power for the regions²⁷, the situation is to an extent as it was before, with the national government controlling the way resources are allocated through the RDAs. This is perceived to be a mismatch in terms of the EU vision for Europe as a 'Europe of the Regions'. The new role for RDAs in allocating the European funds is seen as a potential problem for maximising added value, though not for the local level:

"[Policy mismatch] is not a problem for a local authority, but more a problem for the RDA. They have to work out a regional strategy and as the delivery body for structural funds. But for Bristol CC, jobs and growth have been on our agenda for so long – we have wanted to focus more on economic development and that is driving us more – we're getting the money for economic development rather than regeneration – I think it fits quite well with what we're doing and what we want to do [policy wise], though I think we would have taken this agenda forward anyway [without European influence]" (Interviewee 10).

The absence of any specific reference to the regional issue being a problem in implementing European structural funds is perhaps surprising given the consensus amongst interviewees that a stronger role for devolved regions was idealised. However, there was a view that increasing regional devolved power was less about overcoming a mismatch with European preferences, and associated rather in reducing the number of organisations and overcoming the saturation of governance identified in chapter 1, as suggested by one GOSW official:

²⁶ The European Commission has designated 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The year takes place within the overall framework of the first-ever European Cultural Agenda, (May 2007) which seeks to promote of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue and culture as catalyst for creativity in the framework of the European Union's jobs and growth strategy (Lisbon Strategy) and promote culture as a vital element in EU external relations. Bristol's headline event was a conference for cultural academics, policy makers and community practitioners held in April 2008 entitled 'Intercultural Dialogue: The Way Forward' (BCC 2008)

²⁷ In 2003, the North East region of England voted against an elected regional assembly in a referendum. This rejection put an end to the idea of elected regional assemblies for the foreseeable future.

“As for long term for regional policy that will rest with the political parties, it may be that we will see just one regional structure which may mean for example an amalgamation of the functions of GO and the RDA. My personal view would be that it would make it easier for stakeholders and local government in the region if they had just one regional body to relate to. It might also make things more “joined-up” if there were less organisations dealing with issues. I think that there should be more power to the regions and we need to decentralise back to local authorities - with the amount of organisations involved there is inevitably too much overlap and this complicates governance of the region and its cities. The biggest problem is the power which The Treasury has - Harold Wilson tried to split its powers in the 1960s, but failed. The Treasury, which of course holds the purse strings, remains very powerful in dictating how things are run” (Interviewee 2, authors emphasis)

The acknowledgement of overlap and the consequent recommendation for rationalising the governance through the amalgamation of SWERDA and GOSW was not considered viable or likely by another interviewee, commenting that:

“I would be surprised if RDA and GO would merge” (Interviewee 10)

“Compared to most western countries the UK remains very centralised with too much power concentrated in Whitehall - substance of power is not being devolved. In France, local government can raise revenue locally to fund local priorities for example the Mayor of Paris introduced a tax to deal with eye sores in the city. Why not in England? In Scotland they can vary income tax slightly. I think that if local authorities had the ability to levy local taxation it would really invigorate local government in the UK – we should learn from Europe in this regard” (Interviewee 2)

It appears that to suggest a policy mismatch would be unrealistic. This is due to the national governments influential role in forming the Gothenburg and Lisbon agendas that emphasise the need to consider economy and the environment.

6.5 Summary

Hypothesis 3 was based on the assertions made by my scholars deliberating over the role of the nation state in that factors affecting the added value of Europe at the urban level are controlled by national government. This research finds this to be true to an extent. It is certainly suggested that the national government has a considerable influence in determining and shaping the role of Europe at the urban level.

However, it has also been found that local actors, specifically the City Council have a significant role to play too. There needs to be a series of changes to enable the city to gain maximum output of Europe.

The issues and problems identified in the above section give rise to a number of opportunities to maximising the benefit of Europe at the urban level. Table 6.5 presents the issues relative to whether they are to be addressed locally, nationally or at the European level. Having identified the issues, the table sets out potential solutions and the associated advantages and disadvantages to each solution, based on interviewee responses where appropriate. The final two columns identify the action taken to date and recommendations for further action.

Table 6.5: Issues affecting added value of Europe at the urban level and recommendations

Issue	Possible Solution	Likely constraints	Disadvantages/	Likely opportunities	Advantages/	Action to date	Recommended Action
Local Issues							
Public Perception of Europe	Increase Knowledge amongst public and press	Risk criticism of efficiency	resource	A stronger profile for the city	European	Largely undertaken by Commission e.g. through London Office. Europe Direct centres extend the network in UK	Create a specific Europe Direct Office for the city of Bristol
Too short Election Period	Extend election period	None identified		Allows greater vision	strategic	Bristol CC to lobby national government. Government White Paper – Communities in Control [leading to] Community empowerment, housing and economic regeneration (<i>CEHER</i>) Bill	To continue with lobbying government – possible role for Minister for the South West.
Lack of Strategic Leadership	Create a position for an elected Mayor for Bristol Or develop a 'leadership group' of senior politicians & business people	Concern that the Mayor could be from outside Bristol and therefore out of touch (Interviewee 12). Reliance on one person being accountable. Not giving sufficient time for the new system to become established.	and touch	In Italy, Dente found that "autonomy from Rome, and accountability to the public, has been enormously strengthened" (Dente, 1997, p. 185) following the introduction of democratically elected mayors.		A New Leader of the Council and Chief Executive appointed. Case presented for a Mayor Online petition for a Mayor for Bristol currently (www.bristolmayor.com)	Hold a city-wide referendum on whether a Mayor should be appointed
Too great a number of Urban Actors	Reduce the number of actors Or improve networks between actors	Potential loss of Employment		Greater clarity and efficiency within local and regional governance		Bristol Partnership being reviewed Review of regional structures.	10
Lack of European Team at Bristol CC	Increase resources available to Bristol City Council	Increased public spending		Take benefit of opportunities		Internal lobbying	Continued pressure to be applied and a business case established, so that Bristol can be in line with other UK cities who have larger European teams (Interviewee 10)
Lack of Integration	Produce a spatial strategy for the city	Resources		Allow better integration between existing schemes		Local Strategic Partnership in operation	Wider range of partners from difference governance levels

between initiatives	funding programmes	May be predominantly retrospective	Enhance public perception	Sub-national review of regeneration	Independent review of regional governance structure
Democratic Accountability of the RDA	Re-organise the structure of the RDA This is a sort of by-product of the	Could cause political instability			
Reduced European funding available	Lobby European Commission	Over committing resources	Build on the positives from the previous funding streams A Greater take up of European opportunities	Priority for 2007-13 period was structural funds Report being prepared for Cabinet Meeting (end of September 2008)	Increase uptake of a wider range of EU funds in Bristol EC office can help organise training
General knowledge of European project from actors	Increase training and expertise amongst Council officers	Resources available			
Twinning with partner cities	Identify suitable cities to establish new twinning links Increase value of links with existing twins	None identified	Greater economic opportunities Greater cultural interaction and understanding Improve perception of Europe Improve relations with citizens of twinned cities	Active member of EUROCITIES Inter-cultural dialogue events Existing twinning arrangements	Approach cities to form new twinning arrangements. Create a position at the Council to deal specifically with twinning and international relations (Interviewee 10).
Lack of interaction with MEPs	Increase involvement if MEPs at the local level	MEPs need to be engaged in ways in which they can add value; issues risk being too local	Increase profile and lobbying opportunities in Brussels	None identified	Hold some initial engagement meetings with the SW MEPs to explore opportunities
National Issues					
Loss of the lessons learned from European initiatives to date (e.g. URBAN)	Instil the lessons learnt into mainstream national urban policy	None identified	Learn from best practice and take a leading role in Europe.	New Government White Paper on Community Involvement (SEE KIDSON EMAIL)	Follow up the white paper with a programme similar to URBAN II (Interviewee 11)
Attitude	Enhance	Long standing caution over	Efficient use of time for the	Consistent rhetoric showing a	Government guidance on to the

national government attitude to Europe		giving too much power away	national government	commitment to being more European	opportunities presented by European funding streams
The role of the regions in addressing urban issues	Clarify the role of the regions	None identified	Catalyse increased interest from RDA at the urban level – more European spent at urban level.	National Regional review	"
Role of the Minister for the Region	Clarify/amend the role for the ministerial position	Admission that the role was never fully understood	Potential direct link to Whitehall Making government approachable to urban actors.	None identified	Government to clarify the role of Ministers for the Regions. Minister for the Region to be more accountable to city council officials.
European Issues					
Need to maintain urban agenda in Brussels	Increase communication with key European cities throughout the funding period	Issue that the EC is being overly stretched now that it is using the regional approach to managing funding streams	Commitment to the rhetoric that cities are the engines for growth	New funding period demonstrates commitment to cohesion and competitiveness	That specific urban programmes are tiered towards new and older member states. (to reflect the different requirements of member states).

7.0 Future for European Policy

Objective 4: Consider the direction of European urban policy and assess its potential role in Bristol.

Hypothesis 4: The role for Europe in Bristol will be reduced due to EU expansion.

In order to establish the future role of Europe for Bristol, this section begins by providing an assessment of its role in recent years. The role of Europe in Bristol can be divided into 2 distinct time periods, based on the European funding programme periods²⁸.

The first time period is that of 1994-2006, which comprises two funding periods; 1994-2000 and 2000-2006. In both of these time periods, European funding was more readily available, with a greater budget and the opportunity for innovation and good practice. The 'Community turn' in European funding was a new approach to European funding, and signified the first real European involvement at the urban level. In Bristol during this period, the Council did not have to provide robust justification to projects, with them just having to apply to get funding and getting it.

"Bristol use to get money without really asking for anything. This is going to have to change through a more procurement process" (Interviewee 10)

The second period is that from 2006 onwards and is marked by three main changes:

1. The expansion of Europe to 27 member states (up from 25 in 2004, 15 in 2000 and 12 in 1994) has had an effect on the European funding which means that the level of funding available for Bristol has reduced. In addition, the approach to allocating funding has adopted a commissioning approach. In the UK, this has meant that the autonomy enjoyed by the City Council has been reduced, with the role of funding allocation being handed to the South West Regional Development Agency.
2. In the 2006-2013 funding period there has been a change in emphasis from 'hard' urban regeneration projects and socio-economic programmes to a 'softer' set of programmes based on the idea of knowledge exchange and sharing best practice. This is achieved in part through transnational networks such as EUROCITIES, but

²⁸ European funding streams are divided into 7 year slots. The current funding stream runs from 2007-2013.

also through the URBACT initiative²⁹. The shift towards a knowledge exchange approach does not signify the end of Area Based Initiatives (ABI's), as despite intense debate as to their effectiveness, are still acknowledged as having a role in urban affairs from a European, national and local perspective.

3. The strong criticism over Bristol's lack of strategic leadership is in the process of being addressed through high level staffing changes at Bristol City Council, which is a key player in Bristol's MLG. Each interviewee commented on the key role that individual personalities have, and the enormous benefit of having individuals with drive and determination to make things happen. There is wide belief from those familiar with Bristol, that the appointment of a new Chief Executive and Leader of the Council represent a new dawn for Bristol and the "*potential to put innovation into practice*" (Interviewee 10).

There is a strong view that those actors at the urban level feel that the changes identified in the second time period are a backward step, and signals the end to the 'community level' urban programmes at the expense of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas meaning that

"Community policy may have had its window of opportunity which has now passed... A question for the RDA" (Interviewee 3).

The former manager for the Bristol URBAN programme at the European level highlighted the role of individuals rather than the structures, commenting that:

"It depends on how representative these RDAs are – if they admit that URBAN is still ac current issue. If the relationships are good, then this should come up. It's not about a change in the structure, it's about the change in the people- I really believe in the personal background – which is very good in Bristol" Interviewee 11)

An official for the RDA commented that the deeper economic problems were tackled more at the root and not through area based initiatives. This does appear to raise a conflict in strategic approach. The role for the RDA during this funding period cannot be underestimated. Its ability to deliver European money effectively will be scrutinised by other MLG partners, and failure could have severe implications in terms of Europe's role in UK cities and also domestically with never ending debate over the role of the regions.

Despite the reduction in available funding, all interviewees recognised that Europe must continue to have a role in Bristol. There is not a specific programme to replace the URBAN

²⁹ URBACT is a European Programme which aims to foster the exchange of experience among European cities and the capitalisation-dissemination of knowledge on all issues related to sustainable urban development
http://urbact.eu/no_cache/home.html.

Community initiative although in theory, this does not mean that smaller community area base initiatives are to be wholly discontinued at the urban level.

Interviewee 9 clarified the position now and commented that:

“The EC mainstreamed URBAN into structural funds – effectively giving regions the opportunity to ear mark funds to urban initiatives. 10% was given as an example of how much should be spent” (Interviewee 9).

However, interviewee 9 was not confident of this occurring in reality and noted that

“most RDAs as far as I am aware haven’t taken up this option; it becomes a case of lobbying RDA for urban funding” (Interviewee 9)

The situation opens up the debate on the role of ABIs as well as the role on urban governance, although these are inextricably linked for ABIs are generally implemented at the urban level. An official for the GOSW considers that:

“For community regeneration in disadvantaged neighbourhoods I think smaller scale programme’s like Urban II work best. They are being delivered more closely to the communities they are seeking to help and therefore there is more local ownership – especially if the local people are involved with the delivery of the programme” (Interviewee 2).

There is a despondent undertone in this comment reiterating the understanding that the move away from the community term has occurred too early. The same interviewee commented that

“It is therefore a shame that there is not a distinct Urban Programme for the 2007-2013 period. Some of the URBAN activities have been mainstreamed into Convergence and Competitiveness³⁰, but I think they will use their uniqueness as part of a bigger programme” (Interviewee 2)

In addition to their loss of uniqueness, other interviewees commented again on the reduced funding that will be available. One official commented that

“Bristol will of course continue to benefit from EU funds, through Competitiveness and the other sources available to it. But not by as much as in the past when more

³⁰ Competitiveness and Convergence funds are the new funding programmes in the 2007-2013 funding period, which replace the 'Objective 1 and Objective 2 programmes.

funds were available. But I am sure that an important European city such as Bristol will continue to have a profitable relationship with Europe” (Interviewee 2).

Bristol is showing innovation in this regard, and its leading role in the SRN Network is an example of this. SRNEurope is a network of 13 cities across the member states networking project co-financed by the European Union’s INTERREG IIIC interregional cooperation programme and is intended to offer good practice in how European structure funds are implemented (SRN 20008). It argues that there is more scope for sub-delegation of programme priorities to urban local authorities than previous funding periods. Its good practice guide suggests that the Structural Funds framework for the period 2007 – 2013 provides many opportunities to secure the position of sub-regional organisations as key players in the multi-level governance of the EU. The SRN invites local authorities and regional and local development agencies to refer to their experiences in designing new arrangements for managing and spending structural funds in the future.

It is though perhaps too early to comment on how the 2007-2013 funding period will affect the urban level, and what its added value will be. What is apparent is that the lessons learnt from the URBAN Initiative are threatened with being lost, unless the government ensures that the mechanisms that allowed the success of URBAN in Bristol are maintained. The view of interviewee 2 shows that this may not be happening to the degree necessary:

“URBAN planted the seed, but it remains for the [Government’s] sustainable communities agenda to learn from URBAN - this may be happening but much too slowly” (Interviewee 2).

“I am really sorry that this system was dependant on structural funding, and I want to push my opinion, that it should not be dependent on the EU that a structure is working or now – and its dependant on the national government – on the member state. Now there is a lack of money, they think that it’s not worth the effort” (Interviewee 11).

It could be deemed a crude and cynical view, but the interviewee responses from those at the local level (not including those from the RDA) generally demonstrated disapproval or caution over this move away from subsidiarity and the community agenda towards a more economic focus. One interviewee was particularly concerned over the way the governance is developing in Bristol, commenting that:

“It’s changing from lots of freedom and subsidiarity to a complete mess!” (Interviewee 10).

This approach suits the Regional Development Agency (RDA), which is acknowledged as having an economic remit. The role of the RDA in Bristol has therefore been strengthened significantly following the mainstreaming and decision for RDAs to be the programme managers for European schemes although this has caused concern amongst local actors:

“In Bristol, before Paul Owens, Bristol managed structural programmes, but that is no longer the case, so the question now is “will we be able to reach the groups that we want to reach” (Interviewee 10).

This level of autonomy possessed by the RDA has led to questions over democratic accountability and the potential undoing of the achievements of URBAN. Interviewees at the local level expressed particular concern at this, with one City Council official commenting that

“...if a project is not worth more than £10M, then the RDA won’t even want to know about it” (Interviewee 3).

This may have been a crude statement, but the general principle is important as potentially it reduces the role of European ABIs, thereby preventing the lessons of URBAN to be implemented; and contrary to the guidance produced by European funded SRN Network.

This apathy and lack of trust in the RDA’s ability to deliver programmes that will have a direct bearing on the local level is a cause for concern as it raised questions over the legitimacy of sub-regional role in MLG. The European Commissioner’s view that *“anything is possible”*, may be true, but now that the RDA holds the purse strings in regard to European funding, and there is little confidence in its ability or desire to continue any programme resembling the URBAN programme.

There is very much a ‘wait and see’ view amongst all interviewees, suggesting that the paradigm of thinking over suitable urban policy and how best to govern cities is still in a state of flux. Bristol, and other cities like it can be considered to have arrived at a cross roads in regard to the role for Europe at the urban level, due to way that the EU approaches urban issues.

Each interviewee acknowledged that Bristol will receive less funding as a direct result of the expansion of the European Union. The EC noted that this was an issue that the established member states would have to accept as some of the deprivation problems in these countries reflect those found in the UK over a hundred years ago (Interviewee 7). The role of Europe in Bristol has therefore been altered. In recent years, the focus has clearly been on the amount of funding available. One interviewee commented that:

“There are more member states now – all the structural funds programmes have to agree the programmes for each region – and think how many regions there are in Europe now! And the EC has to administer the whole thing. Imagine a programme for each region, and you have to check whether each programme accords with the EC priorities, then if you devolve it further to the local authorities and smaller agencies, just imagine how you can monitor, and this is because the union is bigger – I think that is a reason why it is less. The EC struggles with checking to see all the programmes in each region! There are 16 regions just in Germany! This is a problem for the EC....” (Interviewee 10)

This quote emphasises the point that the urban agenda in regard to role for EU is at a crossroads. When the EC was first established, it did not have an active role for urban policy, and its membership was considerably lower. By expanding its membership and relying on the Europe of the regions, the administrative burden has heightened significantly.

7.1 Common Urban Policy for Europe?

These changes suggest that the EU is facing a crisis in respect of forming urban policy and establishing new programmes directed at urban areas Delladetsima, (2003). Some commentators suggest that there should be an integrated urban policy for across the EU on the basis of there is the Common Agricultural Policy for rural areas so there should be one for urban (Interviewee 9). However, as one interviewee pointed out, there is not a Common Rural Policy’ for the reason that rural issues vary across Europe. On this basis, together with the well-documented problems associated with the CAP, there is no plausible reason for a “Common Urban Policy” for Europe:

“There isn’t a common rural policy – its similarly difficult to create an urban policy because in reality it straggles so many areas – all within the remit of the EU – competition policy, enterprise policy, transport policy, regional policy – which have a European dimension impacting urban activity; it may be desirable but is impossible. More a role for cities and strong city governance than a need for a one size fits all European urban policy” (Interviewee 9)

The UK Government assessment that “it is not clear that the use of structural funds adds significant value in comparison to domestic initiatives” (Batchler & Taylor, 2003: 672).

Whatever one’s view is on budgetary issues, regional eligibility or policy priorities, there is a shared view on all levels that future European urban policy must seek to maximise the added value of intervention.

The uncertainty over the situation is captured in the quote:

Is this the model? It's a constantly evolving picture. What we are now seeing is the policy to suit the current issues. Different agendas change with the times. No one knows what the picture is" (Interviewee 9).

The future of European urban policy remains to be seen and we have no clear proposition to offer (Delladetsima 2003: 163).

8.0 Conclusion

This research has drawn upon existing theories of governance and has contributed to the literature on Europeanization. Previous research has to date, focused predominantly on the degree of Europeanization at the local level, without much focus on the limitations. Nor had it focused heavily on the barriers and opportunities for Europe at the local level.

It has been shown that in Bristol, the governance system is complex and evolving, and only now is there seemingly processes underway that could enhance the efficiency of Bristol's multi-level governance. It has differentiated between governance of the city and delivery of European programmes, and the evolution of Bristol's governance is not dependant on the programme factor of institutional change *per se*; and it does not mean that the outcomes are predictable (Muller and Rouault, 1997).

The role of national government has also been established. It is argued that it is an over simplification to refer to national level as the gatekeeper, as there are clear examples where Bristol has been influenced by Europe (and vice-versa) without central government intervention. The concept of multi-level governance does not lend itself to the concept of a single gate-keeper, as suggested by some scholars. This research has shown that gatekeepers are not the only barrier to full positive engagement with Europe, with institutional arrangements, individual personalities and political processes being particularly relevant. The idea that slow 'governance is bad governance' is supported by the findings in this research. Rationalisation of the relevant actors is long overdue. Those interviewed in this research themselves commented on the 'saturation' of governance at the local level.

The saturation of governance opens a number of questions for further research. At the local level in Bristol, it is considered that the role of URBAN II merits full evaluation, particularly in regard to its long-term contribution to the governance structure, 5 or 10 years after the programme has been completed. Will the programmes instigate a shift to type 2 multi-level governance? This depends on to what extent the barriers identified in section 6.0 can be overcome.

One question that arose during the research is whether Europeanization at the urban level is a goal to be aimed for, or whether it is an ongoing process that European cities should engage in? Should member states have the ability to opt in and/or determine their roles? Would this undermine the European principal of cohesion? The dichotomy between competition and cohesion arose in this research suggests conflicting goals in the emerging European policy for urban areas – but will this be avoided?

It is considered that we are at a cross roads in regard to Europeanization at the urban level. The current funding period (2007-2013) arguably differs significantly more than the previous new funding period did to its former. The expansion of the EU has led to new pressures and represents a new challenge to Bristol, in terms of how it is governed to enable the most effective use of being a European city. Bristol must manoeuvre itself carefully to ensure that these challenges are not overwhelming and build on its reputation within the rest of Europe. Europeanization in Bristol is most definitely a reciprocal process. The onus is on Bristol to demonstrate its willingness to become leading European City.

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11.0 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Interviewee schedule:

Interviewee Number	Interviewee	Organisation	Role/Title	Place/date of Interview
1	Paul Owens	Bristol City Council	Objective 2 Funding Manager (Bristol)	Bristol, June 6 th 2008
2	John Saunders	Government Office for South West England	European Officer	Bristol, June 6 th 2008
3	Steve Morris	Bristol URBAN2 (Bristol City Council)	Urban Programme Manager (South Bristol)	Bristol, June 6 th 2008
4	Matt Havard	South West Regional Development Agency	European Officer	Exeter, SWERDA Office, June 6 th 2008
5	Nigel Howells	South West Regional Development Agency	Head of Competitiveness	Exeter, SWERDA Office, June 6 th 2008
6	Liz Mills	Liz Mills Associates	Director	Cardiff June 7 th 2008
7	Johan Magnusson	European Commission	Policy Analyst - Urban development, territorial cohesion	DG Regio HQ, Brussels June 9 th 2008
8	Nicolas Brookes	South West UK, Brussels Office	European Officer	Brussels, June 9 th 2008
9	Ian Hill	Consultant for Communities and Local Government (CLG)	Independent Consultant	Kensington, London, 21 st July 2008
10	Mareike Schmidt	Bristol City Council	European Officer	Westminster, London 24 th June 2008
11	Rita Labundy	Hungarian National Office for	Policy Analyst	Recorded Telephone

		Research and Technology		Interview 28 th July 2008
12	Robin Kidson	Bristol City Council	Head of Policy	Informal telephone conversation 14 th August 2008
13	Bernardo Rodrigues	EUROCITIES	Policy Officer	Brussels, June 9 th 2008

Appendix 2: Acronyms

BCC	Bristol City Council
BCCI	Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative
CLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
CLSP	Community Legal Services Partnership
DBERR	Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
DETR	Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions
DG REGIO	Regional Policy DG (REGIO)
DG BUDG	Budget DG
DG COMM	Communication DG
DG DEV	Development DG
DG EAC	Education and Culture DG
DG EMPL	Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities DG
DG ENV	Environment DG
DG ENTR	Enterprise and Industry DG
DIEE	Department of Education and Employment
DoH	Department of Health
DSS	Department of Social Security (now Department of Department of Work and Pensions)
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry (now BERR - Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform)
EAZ	Education Action Zone
EC	European Commission
ES	Employment Service
EU	European Union
GOSW	Government Office for South West England
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HERDA	Association of Higher Education Institutions in the South West
HO	Home Office Department for Culture Media and Sport
LCD	Lord Chancellors Department
LEGI	Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
MLG	Multi Level Governance
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NHSE	National Health Service Executive
Obj 2	Objective 2
JPTU	Joint Passenger Transport Unit
SRB	Single Regeneration Partnership
SWERDA	South West Regional Development Agency

UCL University College London

WESP Waste Education Support Programme

WPSD Western Partnership for Sustainable Development

Appendix 3: European Urban Initiatives in Bristol

Bristol was a recipient of URBAN funding for the URBAN I Programme, which ran from 1994-1999 and its successor, URBAN II in the next European funding period 2000-2006. Both schemes funded projects in the most deprived parts of the city and were managed by Bristol City Council. Both funding programmes are now closed, with no new projects to be funded although their impact is still being felt as many projects were implemented over a time period.

URBAN I

Background (adopted from Bristol Urban Programme)

<http://www.bristolurban.org.uk/introduction.html>

The Bristol URBAN Programme is a community-led initiative to encourage and support local residents to regenerate the area where they live.

The URBAN I area covered a population of over 17,000 residents in the wards of Ashley, parts of Easton and Lawrence Hill (Figure A3.1). It included St Pauls, St Werburghs, St Agnes, Barton Hill, Redcliffe, Old Market and parts of Easton.

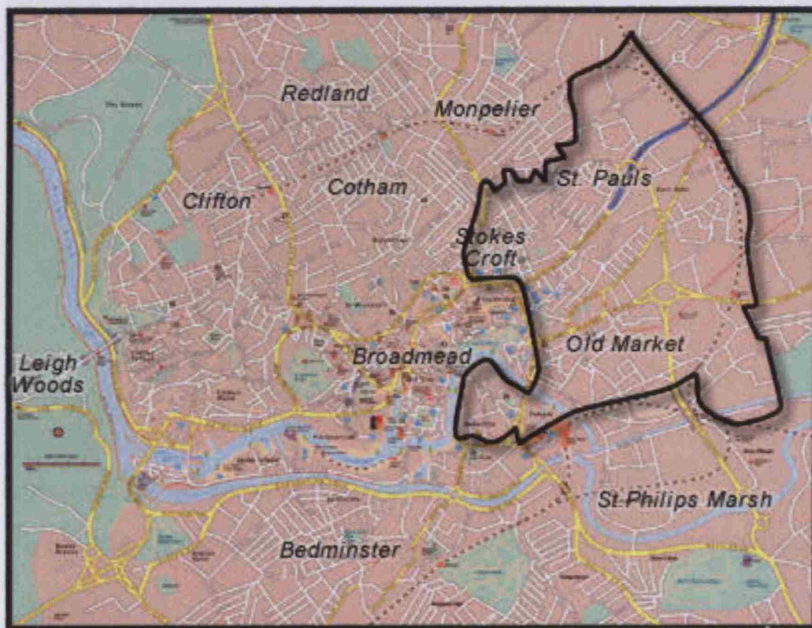


Figure A3.1 URBAN area in Bristol

The Programme's focus was to improve the training and employment prospects of the local community, by increasing empowerment, participation and wealth and enhance the impact of existing regeneration programmes.

A total investment package of almost £7 million was achieved through a combination of over £3 million from the European Commission and public and private sector support. Managed by a local partnership, ideas and projects were created by local people.

Target neighbourhoods were the most disadvantaged, experiencing challenges of isolation, poverty and exclusion where unemployment, for example, is around 22% against a national average of around 10%. The most disadvantaged groups targeted by the programme include:

- Young people under the age of 25
- Women and families with young children
- Disabled people
- Black and other ethnic minorities
- Unemployed people.

In achieving the purpose of empowering and directly improving the employment and training prospects of those in the URBAN area, a variety of projects have been delivered addressing 3 main priorities (Measures) which were:

1. Launching new economic activities
2. Developing local capacity
3. Improving prospects for local employment

All ESF (Measure 3) Projects were successfully completed during December 2000. ERDF (Measure 1 & 2) finished during 2001.

The URBAN Programme ended in December 2001.

Bristol is one of a limited number (118) of experimental URBAN programmes throughout Europe (Figure A3.2)



Figure A3.2 Spatial spread of URBAN I programmes across Europe (Source Bristol Urban Programme).

URBAN II

Background

The South Bristol Urban II programme was funded by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. It began in 2002 and will continue until 2008, although all funds have to be committed by the end of 2006. As a community-led initiative, Urban encourages and supports local residents to regenerate the area where they live, focusing specifically on young people under 30.

South Bristol is one of 10 areas within the UK that are currently benefiting from URBAN II programmes. The other areas are Wrexham, Belfast, Burnley, Halifax, Hetton and Murton, Normanton in Derby, Peterborough, Stockwell, Thames Gateway and Clyde Waterfront.

The Bristol URBAN II programme covered a population of 37,000 in the areas of Hartcliffe, Knowle West and Withywood - all in the south of Bristol. These areas have in common relatively high levels of long-term unemployment, social exclusion and crime, exacerbated

by low levels of economic activity, education and skills and a particularly run down environment. They suffer in particular from low educational attainment and high levels of truancy.

URBAN II has invested up to £7.4m of ERDF in 31 projects during the life time of the programme. This is matched from national sources such as the Single Regeneration Budget and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. Urban has been an innovative and exciting community regeneration programme that directly involves young people from the local community.

This focus on young people is centred on three key priorities (Bristol URBAN Programme):

- our work (improving access to employment),
- our place (creating a safe, attractive and healthy environment) and
- our future (to ensure that young people see themselves and are seen by others as part of the solution not the problem).

The South Bristol URBAN programme has been successful in:

- targeting funding to make a real impact on long-standing economic and social deprivation
- Strong local community support and capacity to manage the programme
- The involvement of young people in the decision making structures

Specific results of the programme include:

- 573 Young people assisted into employment
- 4094 people receiving employment advice and guidance
- 2002 participants on training measures leading to accreditation
- 62,000sqm green areas/public space created or improved
- 35 anti-crime 'diversionary' activities
- 717 young people involved in the design, implementation or management of the Programme and its funded projects.

The Programme was also a Lead Partner in the URBACT initiative 'Young Citizen's Project' with six partners and two expert cities from accession states.

In addition to the URBAN initiative, Bristol was also eligible for European Objective 2 funding, and was the lead partner in 'SRNeurope', a network established by thirteen European partners from eight countries to share good practice in the delivery of Structural Funds and other regeneration programmes at a sub-regional level. In addition to these, there have been nationally resourced projects such as Sure Start, New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Projects.

Appendix 4: Interviewee Quotes

**All interviewees have agreed that the quotes within this appendix can be published within this dissertation. Where permission has not been given, quotes have not been included. The transcripts within this appendix are not word for word accounts of each interview. The quotes relate only to what each interviewee said, and do not include questions from the interviewer.*

*** Many of the quotes have been integrated into the research, and there will therefore be duplication. Whereas others have been paraphrased and referenced. Not all of the quotes in this appendix have been used in this research.*

Johan Magnusson (Policy Analyst) - DG REGIO, European Commission

The concept of subsidiarity influences everything we do

There are a number of member states who claim subsidiarity but in reality are very constrained – some have few local authorities but very strong ones.

The UK, given the structure with devolution, the important level is N Ireland, Scotland, Wales and England, but beyond that it seems to be quite centralised. For example, the regions within England are not so powerful, and also the cities for example are different to those in the Netherlands, where on paper there is a centralised government and not so strong regions and municipalities but I'd say that Dutch cities have more influence on urban policy than in the UK because of the national citizen (???). This makes it difficult for us [EC] because we want the cities themselves as much as possible, to be responsible for the implementation, drawing up the programmes, problem formulation and for the implementation of the management of funding; but then they will say "We cant have that here because of the minister for finance who says "we cannot do something like that" and "we cant let the city do this" because it doesn't fit in our system and that's how we do it here. We have to accept that.

Of course it becomes difficult for us, because we want to see cities involved but for very national reasons, it is not possible. I think there is worry in some member states who feel that if you give financial responsibilities to lower levels then they cannot handle it or manage the money and they may feel it is giving away power, if money is power. I wouldn't be surprised if this was the case in the UK.

If we are too prescriptive, people say the EC doesn't give us the freedom that we need to develop programmes because their situation is very specific. On the other hand, if we give broad guidelines, people will say "oh we don't know how to do this", so people ask for more guidance; we need to strike the balance somewhere and that is what we are here to try and do.

New member states like to have detailed guidance, where as countries like the UK and Scandinavian countries are quite happy generally to not have a descriptive policy.

Sharing best practice needs to happen at all levels and to be a shared exercise – national government, EC and various networks and city organisations.

In some member states, there may be no domestic schemes. In new member states, integrated urban development is something completely new. For example in Latvia, if you say "integrated" to city officials they will not know. They think everything is sectoral; transport is for transport department; there are absolutely no linkages, because traditionally everything is top down. In such cases, European programmes bring in new thinking that was not there before. But in the UK, such aspects were there from the start- Then UI would say that this networking can be a good thing because what you see in advanced member states like France, and urban development there is probably the most advanced there in Europe. But for linguistic reasons, and other reasons (?), there are few people outside France who know what they are actually doing – as of course there was no networking outside member states, or it was at least limited. I think a European dimension can bring in this networking and see what is being done across borders and take on ideas.

I think there is a complimentary relationship between URBACT and EUROCITIES.

If you look at the Regional development Fund (RDF), you can still do the same things that you could under the old URBAN community initiatives and in the Netherlands, they are trying to do that. But in some member states, they have interpreted it as “no – everything should be about innovation and knowledge”, which I think is a bit too a narrow interpretation of how policy could be developed. What you can do now, you can marry these things and orient them in deprived neighbourhoods – regulation is very broad allowing you to do many things. We have stretched the limits and it doesn’t exclude a targeted focus on neighbourhoods – you can have a social understanding – in reality the scope is very broad.

Role for ABIs? “absolutely – one type does not exclude the other. You can do a small ABI in a deprived area on the theme of innovation and knowledge but with a social touch – everything is possible”.

If member states set up very complex systems with many bodies, we cannot do anything to change this – that is beyond the scope of the EU. We can present arguments but there is no legal basis for us to bring change.

EU expansion will mean less money for the older member states. EU must give more money to the poor than to the rich – they must accept that they will get less. Don’t forget, that social problems in newer member states are a different type and you would have to go back 100 years or more to see the same problems in the UK.

It is difficult to look for a model. If you look at the city level, its very difficult to do effective urban development if you have a very sectoralised city administration – but its not just at the city level. If you are a city, you have to work with the sub-city level, neighbourhood councils, then may have a region, you have a nation state, you have the EU.... you have to work both horizontally and vertically. At the city level, you really have to think like that.

I think that most modern cities will do that, but if you have a very sectoralised tradition, or if you have a politically complicated situation, for example unstable coalitions of many different political parties, which makes life more difficult because it becomes unstable and you can’t really develop a policy and then you complain because it’s too complicated because we have to do all this coordination, but in reality the problem is the political situation. The problem is in local politics, but we cannot tell cities how to govern..

The EC prefers all levels to communicate with each other – speaking of multi-level governance.

I’m not sure if it helps the city local level comes to us here at the EC and says the national government doesn’t listen – of course they can do that and we wont say “no no get out of there!” but to find a solution to these kinds of problems, must be found in terms of working together at various levels – it is difficult to approach these problems in any other way.

There was an URBAN2 programme in Bristol, which as far as I know was very good and very innovative and I would have thought that they would maintain to be very active and be involved in URBACT, to show innovation and get attention – and it seems then it could be a forward thinking and European city.

Strong personalities have a big role – for example in branding campaigns, I’d say that they need to find people who are good at promoting interests and I would have thought that is how other cities have managed this – it needs to be very well thought out, and a lot of work behind the scenes.

Ian Hill (Consultant to CLG – and worked on INTEREGG project in Bristol)

In terms of European funding – Bristol they have got the most devolved structures that hasn't been replicated in other UK cities.

The project we worked on with Bristol was SRN – the sub regional delivery of structure funds- very clear that sub regional level was very effective – the European Union thinks of the regional level and not below that. The reason the devolved system in Bristol was due to the Urban programme – which was one EU programme that looked at the urban level. In Bristol they have tried to replicate the URBAN model in terms of how they delivered the other structure funds – and I think the drivers were the city council and government office – in 2000-2006 programme. Suspect this won't be continued due to the role of the regional dev agencies.

The URBAN programmes have been successful across UK but in Bristol- but other cities haven't managed to use URBAN model to deliver other structure funds. I think it was the will of the local and regional partners – in 2000-2006 period – you needed the support of your government office- and Bristol were successful in gaining the support of the GOSW.

Governance evolved over a period of time – and this is to do with multi-level governance – there are the partners you get everywhere – statutory bodies – RDA and GO, but in Bristol the role of less formal structures for local delivery – urban partnership, local delivery vehicles –is more prominent. They are not unique – but more to do with how they are tied into governance – what's happened in many parts of the UK there was a certain level of devolution of structure funds from the government office but the GO would retain many of the functions- particularly the managing authority. Elsewhere in the UK the GO and the RDA would not devolve the managing authority. I suspect it was an agreement between the CC and the GO.

In Bristol they managed to get a lot of cross over from the structures to deliver specific structural funds and other things that were going on in the neighbourhood. In Bristol they managed to tie existing local area partnerships with the URBAN and Structural funds – so they used existing structures very effectively.

Disagree with Liverpool in Wofhardt et al – swap with Bristol.

Different views depending on the level [of people interviewed].

One of the issues for any place – they will have developed structures in the late 1990s –early 2000s they will have adapted the structures to cope with the delivery of Euro structure funds and what has happened since then in UK – has shifted the picture significantly – for example local strategy partnerships, neighbourhood renewal, Local Economic Growth Initiative (LEGI) have started to put more emphasis on locality (or territory in European jargon) which is the level below the region and this affects how you deliver urban programmes at the local level. A direct European influence as it forces cities to adapt their models and structures. This forces cities to adapt their models and structures.

Cities are therefore under pressure from Europe and national – competing influences on local governance and many European structures developed in the mid 1990s because of a EC drive to operate at a community level – before then structural funds dealt with macro level stuff. Since Graham Meadows, (became Dir general) instigated a process of local community development which spawned Urban – many cities started to develop community based regeneration activities structured around that model at a time when there was no disadvantaged area policy in the UK because we were at the end of the Thatcher government and beginning of Major years – that's didn't support that kind of policy. So for a number of years, the UK was playing catch up as it started to instigate neighbourhood level policies – starting in SRB in 1995 – significant acceleration of neighbourhood model during the Labour years in 1997 - so we had structures that started growing around the European model because that was the instigator and then gradually transformed over time – because

things like Local Strategic Partnership arrived in early labour years- constantly adapting structures to fit the paradigm which was changing all the time.

Part of a shift of economic theory – generally there was recognition around Europe that top down economic trickle down development was not the only way to do it. So there was a certain coincidence of thinking between European policy and UK policy – I would argue that European policy was more advanced – I think it drove the way in the mid 1990s. One of the first places to jump in and take a community based approach was Liverpool with their pathfinder programmes – which were quite radical. A pre-cursor to what happened in Bristol.

I don't think UK policy was changed explicitly – not a direct learning across from one to the other – it was more a case of the paradigm had shifted – policy was drifting in that direction anyway.

The ultimate expression of subsidiarity in terms of the delivery of programmes– how low can you go.

The role of the RDA is a significant factor. RDAs operate a much more top down model of economic development. They think at a macro –regional level so it's more difficult for them to think at a territorial level and they are often driven by a market driven public sector approach because that is their constitution – so I think they are particularly responsible for pulling European funding programmes to back in how they looked the early 1990s. Also the limited availability of money is a factor – because RDAs are having to make tough decisions in how to target funding. I suspect that the RDAs are not giving community economic development programmes in the minds of RDAs are not giving the very large transformation of programmes they want to see – not because they are poor value for money – I think there is a lot of added value. But the RDAs want smaller number and larger projects.

There is a strong drive from Trade and Industry BERR? (parent dept for RDA) to manage RDA to manage structural funds programmes – which is logical from their point of view – an unpopular commission with the EC – some individuals were very unhappy. Partly due to lack of democratically accountability – almost as though the EC wanted to see the structural funds as something distinctly European – and they were concerned that the structural funds would become absorbed into the RDA main budget and lose their European flavour.

UK set a case for withdrawing payment into structural funds – was a debate on to how structural funds were to be spent: differences/advantages:

- Duration of structural fund programmes – 7 year planning horizon – unknown in ~UK policy terms – the security that comes with the programmes is significant
- Innovation – Europe drives new approaches that you don't get in national policy (eg community economic regeneration is the best example – e.g. URBAN and concentration on knowledge economy – never used to be national mainstream thinking.

Are still driving policy – e.g. economic impact on climate change.

- Structural funds are a very tangible and visual expression of European membership.

Great variation across Europe – in terms of perception and the way they implement them. Eg France has very centralist model – you may have regional council – but you have very little local partners – far less than in the UK – so you get different levels of governance and planning and delivery across the EU.

29:00

I would argue that the driver is predominantly at local level because the national policy does not favour European large scale over Bristol ??? You have to consider that there is a difference between a city that is effective as consuming European funds, like Bristol does, and a city that engages with the wider European project like Liverpool- European city of culture – engaging with Europe is not just about funds – that's an interesting concept and that is how Europeanism is embedded in the governance of a city – particularly the city of culture – Bristol is like in the second division – behind Liverpool, Barcelona, Milan etc.

Maybe that's the difference – its got a unique role in being the manager of its own programmes (it was!) at that time it the highest level of devolution of all UK cities which was unique – but this does not not necessarily mean that it is more European city than Liverpool or Glasgow – because that level of devolution did not necessarily transform anything else with how the city engaged in European activity.

Difference between programme delivery and city governance. In Bristol the programme delivery structures do not cover the whole city- they are neighbourhood programmes. So we don't have something that transforms the city as a whole that the example that springs to my mind is the city of Montpellier - which was a fairly backwater place in southern rural France and through exceptional leadership and exceptional partnership governance turned itself around and has now become apparently the most desirable city to live in France. Its now a economic powerhouse in the south of France particularly in high tech industry. A lot of this is accredited to a particularly dynamic mayor; leadership from the top that was transformed downwards into the layers of governance; I don't see any of that in Bristol. What I see is a very effective partnership delivering certain programmes at the neighbourhood level. This raises an interesting question about territorial dimension – which is an interesting European concept. Which has now imported to UK public policy – the concept of the territory; its smaller than a region but bigger than a neighbourhood – what is it? The EC knows – A territory is not St Pauls; it may be the City. Its the unit with which people identify, and its a good level for governance, and it doesn't correspond with administrative units.

Are there conflicting policies? Territorial policy is not necessarily consistent with the very local level community policy – which is not necessarily consistent with 'Europe of the regions'.

Community policy may have had its window of opportunity which has now passed. A question for the RDA.

The EC mainstreamed URBAN into structural funds – effectively giving regions the opportunity to earmark funds to urban initiatives. 10% was given as an example of how much should be spend. But most RDAs as far as ~I am aware haven't taken up this option). It becomes a case of lobbying RDA for urban funding. proud

Bristol's role of influencing policy?

There has always been the opportunity for regions to engage directly with European institutions – always happy to receive regional delegations. The EC would rather talk to a whole region than a specific city. More willing to with South West than Bristol. But networks like EUROCITIES are helpful to formulate policy There has always been as tornf policy interplay with European institutions and those kind of networks. The Committee of the Regions also have a role in promoting the local ? policy.

Policy formulation in Brussels is a lot more open than it is in Whitehall. For example if you want to ring up a EC official, you just look up there name on the web and call them. Its much easier to deal with people from the EC and they are always very willing to engage with stakeholders. I am not saying its perfect – but its far more accessible than UK policy formulators. The EC likes to metaphorically fly kites – eg 4th EC report effectively the beginning of a dialogue – put forward all sorts of ideas out to test the water – an effective way of using the networks out there to comment.

I think cities feel as though they have more access to European institutions than to national ones. In the UK it is very political – there isn't the same opportunity. Core cities responds to national policy consultation, where as Eurocities has a more open dialogue.

One or two regions in the UK have developed a European strategy, which try to understand engagement with European project from angles – they are engaging in programmes and projects, and the strategy tries to say there is much more to it than this – there is engagement and cooperation with European cities and institutions and trade links etc – and I think that if any city tried to take on Richard Cabourn's challenge of being 'more European' then European theme needs to be perceived in all aspects of European institutional departments at best (?) – community partnership in governance terms – not a physical partnership but a whole stakeholder group – you need to have Europeanism engaging with Europe's institutions and opportunities into all the stakeholders. I suspect that is more prevalent in other EU member states than the UK – due to really basic things like physical geography – the island mentality. If you live in Brussels you just drive over to another county to work.

There is a role for governance in changing the perception of Europe in the UK- e.g. Glasgow seen a European city due to urban level...

In Bristol it seems that the vertical governance is not as effective as the horizontal. You have in Bristol a number of stakeholders working at a local level to deliver, very effectively to deliver European programmes, but what I don't know is whether the government office, the City Council, and the local community organisations and the local trade organisations and business associations, operate on the same view.

I think the idea of a governance system that isn't just horizontal or vertical is valid- if you look at the dynamics of what goes on in successful places – it is a result of process factors – networks, leadership and the presence of key actors who can access cash. Those are the criteria for cities who want to perform at a European scale.

Moving from vertical to horizontal is probably an over-simplification. There is a need to branch out more than rather than moving just across- e.g. what is the relationship between the chamber of commerce and trade organisations – horizontal or vertical?

The idea of a directly elected mayor has been part of the European scene for many years – a new concept in the UK. They attract criticism in the UK simply because its not how we have done it before; change. Also there are huge differences in the responsibility of mayors- eg the mayor of Hartlepool has very different power than Boris Johnson.

Leadership does not have to be equated to a single directly elected leader. You can very good leadership from a council leader who is not directly elected.

A degree of concern over this. The Montpellier example came from a mayor being elected in for several terms – long term vision able to be seen through. But you have to look short and long term. There is no relationship between funding allocations and election terms – but this is difficult in practical terms – you just have to work around it.

I don't know of any institutions that take UKIP party seriously. People tend to work around them rather than with them. It is more concerning when mainstream parties try to retrench from European engagement.

The GO are a significant player – probably less so now in the new funding period, but they were very significant in the transition period. Their role has changed now.

I would be surprised if RDA and GO would merge.

Regional policy in the UK is very different now.

*On one hand there is feel to pull power down from the regions towards the local level (Review of sub national regeneration structures produced by national government*** - document setting out the phasing out of regional assemblies). Some power will go to local level, some will go to national and some will go to RDA – very hard to know what will happen.*

Minister for the Region – quite an ambiguous role. I don't know what their influence. It sounds a powerful title – but its a mystery!

There isn't a common rural policy – its similarly difficult to create an urban policy because in reality it straggles so may areas – all within the remit of the EU – competition policy, enterprise policy, transport policy, regional policy – which have a European dimension which have a European dimensions impacting urban activity; it may be desirable but is impossible. More a role for cities and strong city governance than a need for a one size fits all European urban policy.

You can't look at Europe's role as different streams in isolation.

In the Bristol context, programme implementation is like a subset of city governance. You have government structures but they are government structures which are tasked to for specific areas. It is not city governance in precise terms of Europeanization. You have to differentiate between programme implementation and city governance.

Who actually governs Bristol? The title of your study answers this point! MLG is something that happens over time; The CC does not govern Bristol. Many of the city developments are impacted by Private business involvement. Much of the harbour development is private money. The question of who governs is highly complex which is why the concept of MLG is a very valid one as it helps understand the dynamic of what goes on at the city level.

The city ability to bypass national government. Happens in policy terms without a doubt in areas that are not necessarily endorsed by national government. Sometimes it happens in funding terms.

[bypassing nat gov] Interesting expression of the concept of Europe of the regions which is a natural extension... national government could be scared of giving up power. In Germany where they have federal systems- its far less threatening because their whole national system is predicated around that level of devolution. But in UK with a centralised government its different. Would have been a natural dialogue. Interesting to see how Wales and Scotland perceive themselves as European nations, unlike England – demonstrates less control from Whitehall.

I think every European policy in the last 5 years has been driven by the enlargement of the EU – in regard to trade, migration, funding etc... all predicated by Europe growing. Interesting to look at the policies that are emerging – eg cohesion policy.

Challenges facing EU around urbanisation and climate change, and some policy is getting squeezed out because there are more pressing things going on out there in the big wide world. There are less reference specifically to urban issues than to issues that can effect any region in Europe. EU is trying to get hold of the bigger picture.

Is this the model? Its a constantly evolving picture. What we are now seeing is the policy to suit the current issues. Different agendas change with the times. No one knows what the picture is.4-2007.

1:31:57.

It would have been desirable to have had a masterplan, it would have been impossible in practical terms.

When the UK government introduced LSP through the national neighbourhood renewal in 2001, part of that was to rationalise partnerships, after recognition that there was partnership overload, and it

was hoped that LSP would rationale. I don't think they have done – a vain hope. The more you introduce the more partnerships there are.

ENDS.

Paul Owens (Objective 2 Manager) - Bristol City Council

It could be seen that European funding is just another funding mechanism on one level to enable local economic objectives to be implemented.

Broadly there are two types of schemes – EU talks about quite a lot of transnational exchange projects which is good in the way that it enables regeneration practitioners to partly plagiarise good or best practice from across Europe to see how it works whilst I suspect that a lot of regeneration practitioners in the UK go to college to learn all about regeneration in the UK and all about North American models to some extent, so it is for me useful to explore the breadth of European situation and how they get involved.

Transnational type projects.... The EC encourages networking, general broad feeling about making us all feel a bit more European, and it is funding for and to see what opportunities are available for either exchange type programmes or programmes that could be implemented in tandem in various member states or regions. So its funding opportunity, but more importantly, its the opportunity to networking, to see find out what works and be a bit more experimental and plagiarise good practice and identify good practice. That is one aspect of European funds, which is a smaller part of the budget, but it is more like a training opportunity as well as an implementation opportunity.

Bristol has led the SRN Europe network which is funded by INTERGE 3C programme where we developed a partnership of 12 cities and regions from across Europe to explore good practice in the delivery of structure funds at a sub regional level. Through meetings. Raised about 590,000 EUROS from EC various meetings and conferences across Europe looking at the context of regeneration delivery and identifying lessons from good practices.

We managed to come up with reports and papers, which we have been trying to influence national government and the European Commission and the future of delivery mechanisms and structural funds which are 65 billion a year, efficiently spent.

Obj 1 and 2 which have facilitated real investment on the ground to and improve the economic lot in disadvantaged areas in Bristol and across Europe, which has given the opportunity to provide additional significant investment to train people and build business units address market failure to gain skills to enhance employability.

There are niggling disadvantages to European funding; the bureaucracy behind it is immense particularly with European Social funds. There are concerns over whether the audit requirements are excessive, the amount of money that individual programmes have to spend on additional auditing over and above standards normally expected in the UK- a lot of money is spent on this, which arguable could be diverted to the beneficiaries in the local communities and enterprises.

There have historically been different standards of probity across Europe in terms of expenditure of public money and in western European and Scandinavian countries have had relatively high standards of probity and audit. There have been mispending of funds, particularly European funds in particularly southern Europe – this is due to a culture of spend and probity. This is reflected in European funding regulations where eg – Bristol CC is allowed to audit its own expenditure, I know municipalities in Greece or Italy for example, are not...

It is on a risk based model, based on past experience. There have been a number of publicised scandals over misspent of EU funding in some parts of Europe, which has led understandably to very strict control being imposed by the European commission. Some may argue that the pendulum has swung too far.

Ultimately, if the money is being spent to achieve outcomes, ie economic competitiveness addressing environmental agendas and a bit of cohesion thrown in... where obviously some of the money needs

to be spent on regulation , controls, audit, it is appropriate, getting the right balance to spending to address your objectives is difficult.

EU has required Bristol to change its document retention procedures.

Priorities fit with Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas on economic growth and environmental sustainability, broadly speaking, European priorities for economic growth or environmental protection, tie in fairly well with UK domestic policy objectives. Programmes such as SRB have been a significant element of enhancing economic performance.

Big debate in Europe in the last programming period, with a number of countries, including the UK government, have been arguing for a renationalisation of funds instead of sending funds to Europe and having it sent back with strings attached, there was an argument for the UK government to just hang on to the money and just disperse it – pros and cons to that.

One of the things we did in Bristol in the Objective 2 Action Plan process, because we had a degree of flexibility in how we administered the programmes, we developed a joint application. So we had projects seeking SRB funds, for example they would have to complete the same business plan format, to a large extent the same application forms for both or either pot of money.

This is something we worked on in Bristol, and there is probably more policy convergence here in Bristol than anywhere else in the UK but we have done this so that the delivery organisation is good at what they do: deliver programme projects on the ground. We don't automatically expect them to become automatic experts in European Bureaucracy we can help them with that – so in an effort to make it easy, to enable investment on the ground to be delivered, we tried to stream line it to make easier for them to access funds – we have had the same appraisal and decision making process for o2 and SRB in Bristol – decision making made by same committee panels with a view to ensure better investment decisions – so locally decide which programmes are the most appropriate, to spend scarce resources on. We arranged committees to make their decision to ensure synergy between the programmes and to avoid duplication.

Working well? Reasonably well in Bristol – we sought to deliver European funds thorough a locally determined action plan because otherwise, without the action plan approach, decisions realistically would have been made in Plymouth and local investment in Bristol – we thought we would have got less a joined up approach. Local decision making we are hoping to address local, regional and European priorities simultaneously, that's why we are using local action plans.

We ran a network of Objective 2 funded projects, so the projects could share ideas and provide feedback, and guidance, opportunity for projects to have a better idea of similar projects. Useful – ran for 2 or 3 years – though this became less useful as projects got to know each other – useful vehicle for opening stages.

In Europe, there are a number of umbrella organisations for the delivery of social enterprise in Bristol with good networks. Networks across the country are less good that's for sure – in fact one of the reasons we set up our interreg projects, was that there were no existing networks. No networks existed for sub-regional delivery organisations – there were no networks – so we took a leading role, so we were keen to improve our performance.

On a formal basis, we are pretty much left to our own devices, we have an agreed delivery strategy and mechanisms to how we deliver and we have quarterly reviews with government office, which we discuss progress and performance and Bristol Objective 2 programme as part of the regional objective 2 programme. In some ways, its quite nice that we are left to get on with it without too much interference, we come up with a regional strategy with government office and they make sure that we stick to what we are supposed to be doing – but beyond that we get a significant degree of flexibility to implement as we see best, which is fairly helpful.

Europe rarely gets involved with local type projects – it is a devolved very local level – devolved hierarchy. We have visits from MEPs and EU officials to showcase what we are doing – realistically – the chain of command is that we report to GOSE and regional partnerships, and then the GOSE and regional partnerships report to Brussels. This structure works for the main delivery programmes and the objective 2 programme, that's roughly ok . Transportation programmes –there tends to be a bypassing of government offices or regional structures, and we work with European institutions such as the INTEREG programme.

Limited extent. Whilst there has been a significant amount of publicity, related to European funded projects, targeted at parts of the most disadvantaged parts of the city who we have tried to engage and empower most – whilst there has been some understanding, that it has involved European investment has had to play – I wouldn't say it has been common currency!

I wouldn't say that community involvement is enforced – there are many community groups in Bristol anyway – however, there has been a move in Bristol towards establishing neighbourhood partnerships, which have a greater involvement of local communities. This has been supported by European funds through the objective 2 action plan, where we contributed to neighbourhood renewal investment in the development of neighbourhood partnerships and also providing training programmes for empowering local residents to fund a range of programmes – how to be a treasurer of your community groups etc... worked with thousands of people to basically up skill them and enable them to be better participate in the governance of their neighbourhood and contribute to regeneration initiatives.

Balanced? Not sure there is an imbalance. Community partnerships can be fairly vocal. Everyone's need is heard. Democratic accountability varies between partnerships. There is a degree of he who shouts loudest for sure, although the model of partnerships is evolving within Bristol first of all we had neighbourhood renewal partnerships in local areas, and we are coming to neighbourhood partnerships which are groupings of 2-3 wards with greater cllr involvement in these partnerships...

The Council have employed community development workers and partnership engagement staff to help communities to come together and provide guidance and support – not exclusively grass roots up, there has been some support and mechanisms to allow partnerships to come together and have a meaningful role. Unless a partnership has something meaningful which they can contribute and deliver make changes – people are not going to waste their time. Partnerships need to have an opportunity to be meaningful and must have a genuine opportunity to contribute and make changes – or what is the point?

The UK has a long history of ABIs which the government have recently been trying to rationalise and reduce the number of individual area based initiatives, in some ways yes – its just another area based initiative (URBAN) but, one of the requirements for urban community initiatives, is that they are controlled by a partnership group representing stake holders communities and a wide variety of agencies, which has not always been the case for ABIs in the UK. So it has particularly with Urban 1, it has to some extent, been responsible for introducing greater partnership working and in delivering regeneration programmes which was less common about 15 years ago or so. Arguably it is another ABI, but it did enshrine to some extent, the concept of being delivered or managed by local partnerships.

A lot of projects have made significant differences to improving the quality of opportunities in certain areas. One of the difficulties in the most disadvantaged areas where these ABI tend to be applied to is that you tend to have significant levels of population churn. We help people, we enable people, we up skill people, we help them get better jobs and then they move out to other areas of the city or elsewhere – thus creating a pool of deprivation."

In some ways we have too many partnerships, and to some extent it is the usual suspects who attend them.

EU enlargement – short answer is that we will get less money!

Should be a stronger urban focus as 80% of Europeans live in urban area, and we are referred to as engine s of the economy, and historically there has been a significant investment in rural areas through CAO, and there is still a strong rural lobby in the UK, and most entrenched social and economic problems tend to be concentrated in urban areas and the fact that city regions are the most economic productive areas, I think there should be a greater emphasis on policy and investment in the future.

EU funding comes with a lot of guidance – stronger guidance from Europe as to investment in urban priorities would be a good thing- I think that the European urban initiative has been the only European community initiative based on urban areas and yes, I think more should be done for urban areas.

Transnational networks are good for exchanging information and gathering good practice, which is useful, and I think a lot of it is a glorified training scheme for those involved which I think is a key benefit particularly in the UK where there has always been a bit of a culture of going abroad for conferences being seen as a jolly or something, and are badly perceived sometimes, especially by the local media – anywhere over the channel is regarded as exotic – which I think could make the UK be=come a bit insular in a way in relation to its viewpoints compared to continental Europe.

Bristol is involved in EUROCITIES – which is a learning network but it is a lobbying network and gives urban more clout. Bristol has lost neighbourhood renewal funding – were expecting to get funding but didn't.

Employment stuff (ESF) is the same, but the delivery mechanism have changed – the RDA is responsible for the first time for managing funding which used to be administer by the Government Office and regional partnerships, and in terms of the ESF, the government decided to co-financing is the only way to go in the UK, and in the SW, its been managed by the LSE and Job Centre +.

A number of changes in Bristol in recent years. A dozen years ago there was not strong vertical leadership, does not have apolitical party in overall control, NOC in the city administrated.

There has been a lack of strong political leadership, partly because of No Overall Control in Local Authority, and while the LA has managed stuff, the strategic direction has perhaps been unclear. In recent years, and in the advent of Local strategic Partnerships, and various subgroups has helped pulled together and better coordinate delivery activities in the city which has been positive thing.

Pros and cons of a mayor – gives strong leadership and direction but lack pluralracy or the opportunity to engage disparate interest of communities Bristol to collaborate and form solutions which wil benefit all –

Bristol as a city relates to Europe on all sorts of levels. Mainly talk of regeneration to access EU dosh to make difference at the urban level in Bristol, but Bristol engages with Europe with a Brussels office – and through the local government national bureau.

Main ways we engage with Europe are through the South West UK Office in Brussels, the EUROCITEIS and the LGA (Local Government Association) – 2 way information.

Use for intelligence and lobbying – use as vehicles to find out hat is happening and to lobby for what we want. The vehicles are there. Bristol does have a small European Office in Bristol Marieke Schmidt – fair to say we have small European office.

John Saunders – (European Officer) Government Office for South West England

They are about adding value to domestic schemes...This is a key consideration for ERDF: that the funding adds value to projects that are also receiving funding from domestic (UK) sources. ERDF is always meant to be the final piece of the funding package, and in this context it is enabling something happen that would not have been affordable from domestic sources.

They are additional to national funding" and "though they are restricted on a strategic basis" that ERDF cannot be used for statutory purposes i.e. things that the government has a direct and legal responsibility to fund such as education and health their [European schemes] primary purpose is to promote economic activity; this is demonstrated by the fact that objective 1 funding was quite a lot of money though objective 2 money was less (my note is a bit unclear on that point... is that correct?) Regional ERDF funding is determined by the relative levels of regions with the EU average of GDP (or similar). So in this instance Cornwall has a much lower r GDP than Devon or Bristol. So low in fact that it qualified for Objective 1 and for the new Convergence Fund. This is primarily due the fact that it is a low wage economy.

Objective 2 goes to areas with that are experiencing structural changes in their economies and need re-skilling and diversification. They also usually have a lower GDP than the EU average.

This is also why the majority of ERDF funding is now going to the new member states

In short, EU schemes enable more to be done than would otherwise be done. EU funding is independent of HM Treasury, so this allows greater flexibility in delivery for example projects can include sustainability and IT schemes etc.... So the delivery of EU funding is in a sense independent of domestic politics, although it does have to be delivered in line with national and regional strategies... which should in any event be aligned with the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas

With domestic schemes on the other hand there is always the danger that they can be more driven by politics. This was one of reasons why the desire of the Treasury to repatriate EU funding was not welcomed by many people. Repatriation means that rather than the EU delivering the funding the UK Government would.

The financial and audit requirements for European funding schemes can appear rather bureaucratic. Although things are improving on this front. The situation is not helped by the fact that the EU accounting year runs as a calendar year where as for most organisations in the UK it runs from April to March. Also there are the obvious problems with the exchange rate - we get paid in € and spend in £. This will remain an issue whilst the UK retains sterling.

We always try and align with domestic funding streams, but this is not always possible due to different priorities and timescales. For example SRB and SWERDA funding played a role in delivering URBAN, though they were not aligned as well as we would have hoped, particularly in respect of SWERDA investment. With the development of co-financing for ESF and matching at source by the RDA, who are now responsible for the delivery of ERDF in England, the problems of alignment will fade. With these mechanisms it is easier to make sure that projects align and add value to regional economic and employment strategies.

The challenge of raising match funding (complicated by the point above) and the financial and audit requirements of EU funding can be a challenge for small organisations, particularly community based ones, wishing to take advantage of structural funds. The action plan process, as evidenced in Bristol, allowed for the delivery of Objective 2 and Urban to disadvantage areas as with more up-front support than would have been possible if these had been delivered directly from GOSW.

I think there could have been a lot more interaction between the English regions, CLG and Europe across the structural fund programmes, particularly in terms of sharing good practice and discussing mutual problems. It was better though with Urban, where there were good mechanisms in place – we had a regional UK network of Urban Programmes and through Urbact experience and good practice could be shared with other urban areas through out Europe. Between there is has not been enough interaction. I guess with Urban due to the small and more intimate nature of the programmes it was easier to this. Objective2 being much bigger would have been a greater challenge. There are mechanisms through the Co-operation Objective to share good practice amongst the regions of the EU, and the new Regions for Economic Change" is a sort of fast track initiative that will achieve this more quickly.

The South West of England region has a very good reputation for its management of structural funds, particularly on the financial management and audit side. Certainly we have not has the problems with EU audits that some other regions have experienced.

It is true that member states can interpret regulations differently, particularly if there are grey areas. The UK has a good record of compliance with rules, Hearsay evidence suggests that some member states might be less so, but that might be a subjective judgement!

Structural funds in the UK are delivered through central government departments (ERDF – CLG; ESF – DWP) there are the managing authorities for England. They in turn delegate delivery to the regions, whilst retaining an overview as regards policy and liaison with the Commission. From my experience the regions in other member states seem to have more independent influence over EU funding than in the UK, and consideration of the EU is much higher up their agenda than it is for English regions and local government. This is probably a reflection of the higher role that the EU plays on the continent and greater public enthusiasm for it. It's ironic that in the south west which has received a lot of money from Europe UKIP performed very well in the last Euro Elections. There seems to be a disconnection between the benefits that Europe can and has brought and the public's perception of it. This situation is not helped by the anti-EU stance of much of the popular press here and perhaps our historic 'island mentality'.

For community regeneration in disadvantage neighbourhoods I think smaller scale programme's like Urban II work best. They are being delivered more closely to the communities they are seeking to help and therefore there is more local ownership – especially if the local people are involved with the delivery of the programme. It is therefore a shame that there is not a distinct Urban Programme for the 2007-2013 period. Some of the Urban activities have been mainstreamed into Convergence and Competitiveness, but I think they will use their uniqueness as part of a bigger programme.

However for larger projects that require a more strategic approach, some degree of top down management might be necessary to ensure alignment with the relevant regional strategy. However there should still be engagement and the involvement with those at the receiving end to ensure effective delivery.

I think that the action plan approach with its greater community involvement has been an effective mechanism for achieving such a balance. In the case of Urban things were slightly different insofar as the young people who were also beneficiaries of the programme were also involved in its management. This was the unique feature of the Urban Programme in south Bristol.

The lessons [from URBAN] should not be lost, and should be used to inform national policy and show case to CLG through URBACT"

In England EU funding is rather pigeon holed and has not always been delivered in line with national funding streams. In Wales and Scotland there is more integration and probably greater political commitment to things European because the EU context helps to enforce their national distinctiveness within the UK. A good example of this political support I gave was when Rhodri

Morgan took time to address a Cooperation Objective Conference in Cardiff, I could not image in a Westminster minister giving the subject such a priority.

My experience suggests that there is not very good integration within Whitehall between EU initiatives and domestic policy and this of course encourage an integrated approach, and European schemes are viewed by national government as very much an 'add-on' and are not central to the policy approach - they are isolated from the rest of CLG initiatives for example.

If we had strong and more independent regions in the UK, then EU structural funds would have been even more beneficial - particularly when you compare with places like France where the regional structures play a big role.

The URBAN II in south Bristol was quite unique and innovative in terms of its involvement of young people in the management of the programme – and that went as far as involving them in the decision making process around which projects to approve for funding. CLG have been trying to get some of the ideas mainstreamed into domestic programmes and of course through the Urbact Programme south Bristol has been successful in sharing some of its good practice with other European Urban areas. The evaluation of the Urban Programme will hopefully provide further opportunities to show case its achievements.

It was disappointing that some of the key delivery organisations in the area did not engage as much as we would have hoped, this was particularly so with organisations like the LSC and RDA, whose attendance at Urban's Programme Monitoring Committee was patchy. This perhaps indicated that Urban was not high on their list of priorities.

This approach can be both good and bad; clearly those experienced in the sourcing of funding will have an advantage here, but the minus side is that those funds may not always be spent strategically and where they are actually needed. Within the context of an action plan the competitive approach worked well because it was happening in a strategic context. In some other parts of the Objective 2 area for example there wasn't such a strategic context and projects submitted were on a more spasmodic basis. The new round of structural funds being managed by SWERDA will be delivered on a commissioning basis and they will all be matched funded by the SWERDA. This will mean of course that the funds will be specifically focussed on projects that are helping to address particular needs within the wider context of the Regional Economic Strategy. This will inevitably make access to funds by smaller groups, particularly at the community level harder, but this is perhaps inevitable as there is less funding within the programmes for neighbourhood renewal/Urban type activities when compared with the 2000-2006 programmes. The new programmes are much more focussed on the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, which are the real drivers of structural funds

It has not been a major issue, but it is true that European Funding does have a reputation for being hard to access and manage in terms of the application and tight audit requirements. So in that sense some potential applicants may have been dissuaded from applying. However through the Bristol Action Plan and Urban a lot of up front help was provided to applicants to help them with their applications and there was on-going support once projects were up and running.

The requirement to provide up to 50% match funding is always a challenge to community groups. With ESF the move to co-financing, which in short means that match is provided upfront by the co-financing organisation to match the ESF, has made things easier. It also simplifies the application process insofar as there is just one form to complete rather than separate ones for each source of funding.

The Urban Programme in south Bristol is targeted at young people and did not have purely economic aims, although activities supported did have to fit into a wider economic context - for example Urban might have support young people from the areas to visit somewhere like Alton Towers if it were part of a project that was teaching them how to interact with others and develop their interpersonal. They

need these sort of skills as a foundation to vocational based skills that will have a longer term economic benefit to the area. Likewise with projects to improve the physical appearance of an area which if part of a wider regeneration schemes can help to attract inward investment and new businesses.

URBAN had achieved the balance very well, and really has planted the seed, but it remains for the sustainable communities agenda to learn from URBAN - this may be happening but much too slowly. The UK is unlikely to get the same level of structural funds - so it is up to national government to ensure that the momentum is not lost - European level funding is to be reduced - then this will have an effect at the urban level

"Regional governance in England is in a bit of flux at the moment, the moves towards elected regional assemblies were halted by the north east referendum which decisively rejected the proposal. Since then there has been something of a vacuum, The Regional Assembly structures that were set up a couple of years ago are to be absorbed by the RDAs next year.

The role of GOSW has changed in recent years from being a regional presence for various government departments to one that is more strategic and less about delivering government grant schemes and initiatives. Our role now is to a strategic role that challenges other stakeholders to deliver the Government's agenda.

As to long term for regional policy that will rest with the political parties, it may be that we will see just one regional structure which may mean for example an amalgamation of the functions of GO and the RDA. My personal view would be that it would make it easier for stakeholders and local government in the region if they had just one regional body to relate to. It might also make things more "joined-up" if there were less organisations dealing with issues.

Again from a personal view point, I think that there should be more power to the regions and we need to decentralise back to local authorities - with the amount of organisations involved there is inevitably too much overlap and this complicates governance of the region and its cities. The biggest problem is the power which The Treasury has - Harold Wilson tried to split its powers in the 1960s, but failed. The Treasury, which of course holds the purse strings, remains very powerful in dictating how things are run..

Compared to most western countries the UK remains a very centralised with too much power concentrated in Whitehall - substance of power is not being devolved. In France local government can raise revenue locally to fund local priorities for example the Mayor of Paris introduced a tax to deal with eye sores in the city. Why not in England? In Scotland they can vary income tax slightly. I think that if local authorities had the ability to levy local taxation it would really invigorate local government in the UK.

there is a general feeling that the it lacks vision and internally isn't joined up as well as it could be. My personal view is that the city would benefit from an elected Mayor, particularly in light of the political fragmentation of the council. A strong personality in such a post could make a difference and get things down. However a new Chief Executive has recently taken up post so we might see some improvements. I don't think EU Programmes have much if any impact on the way the council works.

The Co-operation Objective is about sharing common issues and best practices between the regions of the EU. It is also a tool for bringing European Citizens together and giving a real sense of what it means to be citizens of the EU as well as their own member state countries. The new member states would be in a position to benefit from this programme in particular given their relatively backward infrastructure when compared with the richer older members for the Union.

"it is unfeasible for a one size fits all European urban policy, though strands such as URBACT were useful" All urban areas are distinct in terms of the issues and problems they face, and the great benefit of the Urban Programme was that it could focus on these specifics. In the new programmes urban type activities have mainstreamed into Convergence and Competitiveness – so there is a danger they get lost in the bigger picture and loose their unique ability to intervene to address specific issues on a small and controllable scale. There is no doubt that of Bristol have benefited from Urbact and Eurocities, not least from the promotion of the city through involvement with these programmes. It is probably a harder task to measure this benefit.

The distinct Urban Programmes are coming to an end now. Best practice will of course continue to be shared via the Urbact initiative.

As mentioned previously Urban has now been mainstreamed into Convergence and Competitiveness, but the fear is it will lose its uniqueness. But we shall see.

Bristol will of course continue to benefit from EU funds, through Competitiveness and the other sources available to it. But not by as much as in the past when more funds were available. But I am sure that an important European city such as Bristol will continue to have a profitable relationship with Europe.

Mareike Schmidt (European Officer) – Bristol City Council

Its probably right that there is already a European policy – but it needs a strategic context – work needs to happen.

In Bristol, the position is very sensitive with a new structure coming in due course

Europe has a wider agenda [than National level]. As the RDA are now the managing body and there is a concern at the Local Authority level, and how its going to be managed and monitored. In Bristol, before Paul Owens, Bristol managed structural programmes, but that is no longer the case, so the question now is “will we be able to reach the groups that we want to reach”.

Another issue in Bristol is that the EU is driving a more regional agenda with more bigger projects. From the Council's view, we would like to work at the sub-regional level – we need to lobby, negotiate and convince the RDA. The decision for the RDA to be manager was a national government decision. With the RDA, you cant decide what they do – unlike the regional assembly. The RDA just decides what they do. At the moment, Bristol benefits from the RDA, but that may change – so its not in our interest that the RDA is just allowed to decide what to do. RDA's are powerful in terms of funding and are not democratically controlled.

So in Bristol, we need to look at what is happening much more and I think that is different from traditional regional programmes - A Move away from smaller ABIs.

The new approach is focused on growth and jobs, and that is probably an advantage because it serves itself a lot more (?). There is a more ‘goal driven agenda’.

I think that it was super that it (URBAN) was managed locally, because as a Council, you know where the money needs to go [in Bristol].et regard to 40% Urban funding?).

[Policy mismatch] is not a problem for a local authority, but more a problem for the RDA. They have to work out a regional strategy and as the delivery body for structural funds. But for Bristol CC, jobs and growth have been on our agenda for so long – we have wanted to focus more on economic development and that is driving us more – we're getting the money for economic development rather than regeneration – I think it fits quite well with what we're doing and what we want to do [policy wise], though I think we would have taken this agenda forward anyway [without European influence].

There are programmes like URBACT and INTERREG which are driven by the EU and then we react.

I think its a cycle- for example take ‘intercultural dialogue’. It used to mean nothing in Bristol, then we had a conference with the EC and Bristol stakeholders (February 2008), and now it is everywhere in strategic local papers – How did that all happen? It is because of the EU. But it happens the other way around too- for instance, the UK have been pushing the creative industries for ages, and now they are in the European domain.

Bristol is now recognised as a city in the UK [for intercultural dialogue] and have an event to celebrate Eastern and Central European cultures together – its about bringing people together. Problem is that you cannot measure its impact – but its clear that it does have a clear impact. We get good feedback – especially from the British Council who are very pleased.

Its going to inform the Bristol's involvement in the Olympics, and has definitely helped build our profile and also attract funding.

Once we get something off the ground in Bristol, we get good feedback and its great; it just takes such a long time and so much effort to get things off the ground.

It is difficult to say whether our European involvement affects public perception. Though what does surprise me is the level of support for the whole European idea – people are very open and just mentioning the intercultural dialogue – everyone came along and wanted to contribute to the debate.

Bristol is different from the rest of the South West – its more forward thinking and its a big city and has been involved in the EU for a while.

The European programmes push the regional agenda.

I think it would work a lot better with a devolved south west region and would make a significant difference, because at the moment, the RDA is trying to rule us all together in one way, and I think that there is a risk that no-one will know anymore that it is actually European money... this wouldn't happen in an other European country because the regional government would administer the whole thing and it would be clear then but the fact that the RDA is responsible for administering the whole thing.... {?}

National government is slow responding to things which is very frustrating, though I think this is due to a reluctance to Europe. For example, the EC dedicated money to celebrate the ? in the UK, the money went to Liverpool, but the UK didn't match fund it – but every other member state did. This sort of thing happens all the time, so from my point of view it makes it a lot harder for the local authority and regional bodies to promote things without the support of national government.

I would say that more knowledge and expertise at all levels is required. In CLG, I notice the same problems as at local level – I have to update officers on basic European development. Executive members who no nothing about it [Europe].

The election period is very short, so after a couple of years members are subjected to voting and can be replaces after just 2 years and you have to start from scratch. In other EU countries, the election period is 4 or 5 years and you can do work to prepare people. If this duration was extended, it would really help Bristol – at the moment things just change so quickly and there is little stability. Also, there is 'no overall control' in Bristol (hung Council) which also causes problems.

If don't have a 4 or 5 years period, then you cannot introduce something – its easier if the period is longer. We are working to get the period extended – there is also an issue on an elected mayor.

I would say Bristol CC governs Bristol, though other people may something else! However, in some areas, we don't have enough power

It depends how a person [as a mayor] is chosen – the general principle is supported – its very much a European perspective and will give a political leadership. I think this is a requirement due to increased European involvement.

With leadership changes, priorities change and there is no stability – we now have a new CEO who is driving the process.

*Going from a 4 * Council to a 1* Council, I'd say its the way the Council is managed, not only down to political leadership, but also down to the CEO – now we have a new CEO and together with our new leader, it looks better.*

One of Bristol's problems is the way it was managed – the structure of the Council.

The rise of the urban elites, is changing at the moment as the council is going through a business transformation programme – before ach department were pushing their own agenda, but now that is changing and there is a message in the city that we are going to get out there and talk to people – that's what we mean by partnership.

Officers will have to change their way of working.

The lack of a co-ordinated approach represents a missed opportunity [in terms of small and large projects].. This was impossible under the old system.

Bristol use to get money without really asking for anything. This is going to have to change through a more procurement process.

If you have a commissioning approach, then you empower people a lot more than just giving grants. Its better to say "what are you going to do and how are you going to deliver it?"

There has been a weakness in Bristol- they haven't had to work hard to get [grant] money.

In Bristol, we have just one European officer and therefore no resources to help with applications for transnational funding. There was never any support for youth projects – people in Bristol didn't even know about them, can you believe that?

There is some sort of urban legacy [URBAN2], but we could have done better, and could have influenced European policy a lot more, but due to a gap in staffing, so Bristol CC didn't pull their weight. The post of European Officer wasn't filled for a year – there was no European Officer for Bristol! There was therefore not enough lobbying – so Paul [Owens] didn't have enough support.

When I first started (in 2007?) I don't think people at Bristol CC were really aware about lobbying in Europe, so it started in June-July 2007 with a Green Paper on Urban.

The leader wrote the EC after they invited us to write to them and sent it on to the Brussels Office, the EC and national government so now we do that.

So we are slowly developing links with Europe but it is a slow process in Bristol.

Traditionally we have been involved in EUROCITIES for quite a while, but no one here [at Bristol CC] monitored it – it was just membership – just a token. This is still the case now, people just go to the meetings – we are only really involved in the culture programme [of EUROCITIES] and have a working group on.....

We had never chaired any working group before – and its only really valuable if we are involved in an active way. People now report back and it is better – we need to take a greater lead and its slowly changing, though you wont see the impact immediately.

A 'Socially Responsible Teamwork Group' has been set up and we commented on projects around.... and you will see the benefits in about 5 years time

Also in regard to 'Fair Trade' – we have lobbied national government to get fair trade as they misunderstood European legislation, so we want the government to change the guidelines.

We need training sessions for executive members on European agenda and hold proper briefings. Once they understand how important this European agenda is, then they can get involved earlier. The challenge is to get people to understand how it works in practical terms.

We are the only large city in the South West and it sometimes makes sense to go with EUROCITIES or the LGA, rather than the Brussels Office or at the regional level because we don't carry the same power – depends on the theme we are promoting. Transport we go through POLIS – different lobbying organisations for different themes.

The EUROCITIES situation is difficult, because you have the EC giving money to EUROCITIES who then try and influence the EC by lobbying them – there is a conflict between doing projects and lobbying

The Core Cities traditionally does not involve itself in European lobbying – though I think they should work better together – there is a bit of a divide. Nottingham has tried to change this and took the lead the Eurocities AGM in Manchester generally, no one wants to take the plunge and change it.

Because national government gives money, we don't want to criticise them and feel we can't really interfere with national government (referring to core cities)

You have to lobby without being asked most of the time. As a local authority, you have to go out there yourself – we work well with the SW Brussels office in this regard. For example, we will go to the Brussels office for the Green Capital Award and ask how they can support and get funding.

I would like to do more and have more people working with me and a dedicated budget – this would make everything a lot more achievable.

Ben Bradshaw came to Bristol, but I had no contact.... To be honest I haven't heard anything so I don't think it's working very well – there has just been no contact.

In Bristol, we need to work closer with MEPS and have regular briefing meetings.

The fact there are UKIP MEPS has an effect – they are there to put the breaks on things.... Other regions are able to lobby more – we don't work with them [UKIP MEPS] at all. When we try and organise an event, they come along and try to disturb it. It's the same with Conservatives.

Eastern Europe is having a massive affect – it is estimated 25k Polish people in Bristol now.

A lot of people are not actually aware of how much money we are getting anyway, so people won't realise we are getting less. In the last funding period, Bristol got £33m and now get 9 million and 7 million – we will get significantly less – people have no idea what kind of impact this will have.

We don't have a lot of links with central and eastern Europe. There has not been a strategic approach to international partnership – we have traditional twinning links, and these haven't been reviewed – and I think we need a partnership with a central or European city. We are already working with Poland – eg our police and schools are demanding partnerships – how are we going to teach people about cultures without links? There is a demand. No one has looked into it – no one has ever thought about it. Because we have really complicated twinning arrangements – I'd like to have an informal arrangement with Krakow so we can develop exchange good practice. We want to develop projects – and it's harder without these links or getting funding from transnational. There are reasons why we should look into developing these links.

Twinning needs to be integrated into all European and international work that we are doing. It's good if you enter with a twinned city because you have links, the mayor knows each other. Bristol has not taken this approach. Twinning has always been there in Bristol, but it has always been a cultural activity – which is very good – but European work has been separate. There has been no strategic reason to why we are working with a city – people don't ask "what do we want to get out of this"? people don't prepare enough.

A European team would help this process – It's all new for Bristol – support work needs to be stronger.

The reduced funding is a big issue- and the massive impact of Polish people in Bristol – though this will have longer term benefits.... schools in Poland work well and Bristol can get a lot out of this. This can be taken at the city level – the Police have started this already – with staff exchange programmes with Poznan and Krakow – sending police officers to Poland to learn the language and see how things are done – and there are benefits of this. There are benefits.

Definitely has an impact on governance but it's difficult to say what it is. If you look at local authorities – there are various examples of where we have learned from others. A good example is waste

management. Bristol has a 70% recycling rate – highest in country, and that comes from Europe, because our waste managers went to member states.

It's too early to say what the impact of new member states will be.

At EUROCITIES meetings, new member states keep themselves to themselves, and old member states don't make the effort and say hello – sometimes they may ask what new Europe thinks about it – but it will take time.

I'm not sure how much effect a new specific 'European Urban Policy' would have at the local level - I am very sceptical.

I am a fan of the subsidiarity principle - Its fantastic what you can pilot with European money.

I think that although there is some sort of European urban policy you have quite a lot of freedom though in the new funding programme you have less freedom to pilot things and in the management because you have regional

Its changing from lots of freedom and subsidiarity to a complete mess!

There is a view that with the recent changes, and the RDA and the move away from subsidiarity, there is a general message that there is a move away from

There are more member states now – all the structural funds programmes have to agree the programmes for each region – and think how many regions there are in Europe now! And the EC has to administer the whole thing. Imagine a programme for each region, and you have to check whether each programme accords with the EC priorities, then if you devolve it further to the local authorities and smaller agencies, just imagine how you can monitor, and this is because the union is bigger – I think that is a reason why it is less. The EC struggles with checking to see all the programmes in each region! There are 16 regions just in Germany! This is a problem for the EC....

Repatriation could be a good thing – there is a pressure on national government to deliver.

Things in the EC get complicated because there are so many administrative burdens, particularly the forms – if you don't know how to do it, for the first time its not easy – the whole process needs to be simplified.

To a certain extent, you could have the same forms for similar programmes. For every next funding round, you need to know which box to tick – but national government put regulations on as well- National government are guilty of complicating things. The national government need to be fair – I sometimes think it is complicated for political reasons.

I think Bristol is quite forward thinking in European terms – we want congestion charging and have done work with the European commission on that. The bypassing of national government happens and this is a good thing as it challenges UK government and gives a bit of power back to the cities which is a good thing. It will be interesting now in terms of the climate change target. National government is putting together the framework for the UK- and is going to be interesting to how this is going to work.

Its definitely a power thing – they have no idea how European institutions work and they have no idea and they have a perception that it is all complicated. When we have an EU official here, people are surprised at how easy it is to talk to them. The Commission are not allowed to regulate everything. This perception is a British thing – there is such a taboo – people are not educated about Europe... there is no fair dialogue. Once you get people involved, people see the benefit.... younger people here understand better what Europe is about. It is a process.... the UK is behind compared to other European countries.. A lot of policy initiatives are coming from the UK, but after implementation –

everyone complains about the policies, but many of them originate in the UK. For example, the UK went to EU asking for a 20% target.... then its presented in the press as Europe imposes a 20% target on the UK!

It would be good to compare Europe with the USA. The number of people who work for the EC is relatively small. In the US they have more staff.

The role of urban elites and enterprises, could be good for larger strategic work.

I think it would be good if the Council had stronger links with the academics and universities in Bristol. We are behind the rest of the UK.

Before it was all about funds, and now its more about knowledge sharing and getting investment in and learning from others.

We have done it in parallel. Paul Owens' and Steve Morris were the first people to start these new ways of programming and they had salaries paid for my Europe – Bristol was the vehicle.

We should have twinning and European Offices together. Every other core city has a dedicated team – some cities have a China Officer.... Bristol doesn't have a dedicated team.

I must be the only European officer without a proper budget – I have to get politician (Council) to agree to what I do and where I go. I have to get match funding for everything I am doing from the Council once a dept has agreed. There is very much a silo mentality when it comes to Europe.

Bristol doesn't have the same reputation as Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham. The strategy was very good for Bristol, but its not been implemented. The strategy talks about projects, but how are they implemented? What has happened? Our new transport manager is asking – what actually happened? You can't if you don't have the power to do anything.

The most difficult thing in Bristol isn't forming the strategy not developing the ideas but it is implementation of the ideas.

If you compared to a country in Europe, its easier because they have a regional government who can do the lobbying, but we have to do it ourselves – but it can be an advantage (not to have regional governance) because we can go (as a city) to Brussels, where as [EU] colleagues in Germany or France have to go through regional government. This gives us an advantage, but I think I would still prefer a regional government, because it would be more efficient – more devolved power to the regions.

We're not quite sure so we will have a bit of everything - GOSW, SWERDA SWRA, BCC, Minister for the Region.

The Commission have adopted the London approach. If there was more devolved power, Bristol as a city region, would be able to compete with London more. To have a regional government in Bristol, it would have more influence nationally and European.

Bristol, do say we are a European country – it is how the city profiles. The pop Paulo????, EU Minister for the regions, started some work though it wasn't followed up – any event with a European theme helps, with EC speakers, and companies,- you get a reputation. That's what we are trying with the European Green Capital award – we know we are not going to win it- but if we get a city event together, more knowledge more expertise, and get out there... it's not only about profile, its about the lobbying... you get expertise in a certain area and then are considered as the expert for certain things – creative industries is an example – we are not doing well in that area – Nottingham is leading.... Bristol is the second city in regard to creative city – we should be leading on this. There is so much

reluctance to take a lead on this. Nottingham has created and chairs a workshop on creative industries and they are getting the reputation... ahead of Bristol!

We should get some money to do a European Art exchange – Bristol has a reputation for art and creative industries – it would be amazing to promote it on an international scale.

Bristol doesn't have any other city to compare itself to – being the only big city in the South West – next city is London or Birmingham – Plymouth and Exeter are too small to compete. There is so much potential in Bristol.

There was an idea that Bristol could develop an international festival, street art, performance – would go well as Bristol wanted to be an arty city. I said you could get funding from Europe and it didn't happen due to a lack of will. Could go through culture funding – but it just doesn't happen.

Environmental technology conference is driven by European agenda – was decided that because of the 20% climate change target and the structural funding – Bristol will get a lot of money and environmental technology is gaining momentum – I don't know if Bristol would have put resources into it, but because of the international drive (EU) – now could be an international event – Bristol could take a lead – we wouldn't have developed this without European involvement.

Bristol has a bad reputation and this is justified – I was shocked when I first started in Bristol and how the departments worked – sometimes against each other and internal competition – they had the right ideas but its about delivering these ideas and that's what the new CEO is trying to change.

Liz Mills, Nigel Howells, and Nick Brookes:

All hand written transcripts.

Rita Labundy:

Formerly implemented structural funds – then moved to the EC, Executive Officer for URBAN 2 programmes – I managed all of the English, Irish and Finnish Urban Programmes from the European level.

You go back to your country to implement what you have learned from the EC.

Bristol was one of my favourite projects – a very good relationship with Bristol – they had a very good team.

Ideally, national and European programmes complement each other – national programmes should be part of the European programmes, and the two levels should complement each other. In the UK, there was a difference in the complimentary features – very original. The national level complimented the European level and the communication was very good. At the national level, the aims are focusing on the next election and the needs of the local people, but the important thing is how they can imbed these needs in the European governance.

Bristol had a very good attitude to European policies that they found what they were interested in and they put it in the European context – and this was visible to the EC.

Bristol was very welcoming and their programmes were accepted by the commission. There was good communication between the GOSW and the programme officer. – they were organised – the informal relationships made things work. Personalities are very important.

I think that the basic aim of the URBAN initiative, was not that Europe wanted to get involved in the national level on how to solve programmes – it was rather to focus pilot initiatives – what can you do for the person – so a basic change to bottom up thinking. Maybe its the role of the national and local government to solve the local problems. But Europe want s to get closer to people, and if the EC is

not involved, then they get far. Its a very good thing to be in the EU. Its important that people don't get far from the local level.

Those people involved in URBAN 2, there is along term memory of the programme, and I think that their attitude changed towards Europe, then it was worth it. URBAN was a small programme – it was important to open up things to young people – negotiations, involved in local politics, in this regard there are long term benefits. But of course, relating to the new funding period, then its not there anymore its all changed– its dependant on the national government and the member state. What was learned, should be incorporated into national programmes, as the structure of the EU budget has changed, and the expansion of the EU – money goes there. But what they learned can be exploited.

In the UK, it is an old member state – they got more money than they hoped for in the second round – so it was really because of the negotiation. In this period, with 27 member states, the structure has changed, it is not the case that URBAN is in the policies, because it is in – but it should be tackled by the member states, within the national strategic framework – URBAN was before – So if the member states decide to have an urban focus, then they have an urban focus, so its very dependant on the member states. It can be a disadvantaged, because it can be hard for local people to push it through the government, because the government thinks different. URBAN is still important and should still be there. It is the decision of the member states. The regulations give space for urban, but it just a case of how to use it and what extent it is to use it.

It depends on how representative these RDAs are – if they admit that URBAN is still ac current issue. If the relationships are good, then this should come up. It's not about a change in the structure, its about the change in the people- I really believe in the personal background – which is very good in Bristol.

It cannot be integrated as vertical governance. In URBAN, it's important that all topics are together in complimentarily – it can't work in vertical organisations.

I think that cities are involved with Europe– but it depends again on people

I couldn't say about Bristol's governance I was just involved in the URBAN initiative (was involved in Bristol in 2006-7).

New policies coming from the EIB (European investment bank) – shift in the way of thinking and loans rather than grants – competition – the position is different to the 1990's.

URBACT is part of the way to an urban policy.

I am really sorry they didn't continue with URBAN.

I think one person representing can be good – but it can also be dangerous. It is better if there are several reps form the same city. I don't think that this could be a solution to the problem – I don't know.

I am really sorry that this system was dependant on structural funding, and I want to push my opinion, that it should not be dependent on the EU that a structure is working or now – and its dependant on the national government – on the member state. Now there is a lack of money, they think that its not worth the effort. It takes a lot of effort to make things bottom up – more work than top down.

Appendix 5 – Summary of Gothenburg and Lisbon Agenda

Summary of the Lisbon Agenda

The Lisbon Agenda is aimed at turning the EU into the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion by 2010, and was adopted by the European Council in 2000. It remains the key strategy driving the economic development agendas in most European countries. In the UK, important national and regional strategies such as full employment, higher skill provision and wider and better use of modern technologies have been influenced by the Lisbon Agenda. The strategy will doubtless be a driving force for European competitiveness, and will influence the progress towards a more attractive and competitive Europe.

It is vitally important to ensure that the main elements of the Lisbon Strategy are integrated in the Structural Funds Framework developed for 2007-2013.

After the mid-term review of the Lisbon Strategy carried out in 2005, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are recognised as making a crucial contribution to the achievement of this goal.

The reviewed strategy cites the following priorities in the so-called three pillars (economic, social and environmental) of the Lisbon Agenda:

- A “partnership for Growth and Jobs” (supported by an EU Lisbon Action Programme and National Action Programmes)
- Promoting entrepreneurship and skills
- Improving SMEs access to markets
- Boosting research and technological development
- Ensuring open and competitive markets, thus completing the Single Market
- Cutting red tape
- Removing obstacles to labour mobility
- Modernising social models
- Ensuring sustainable development (see Gothenburg Agenda)

Summary of the Gothenburg Agenda

At EU level, the European Summit held in Gothenburg in June 2001 completed the Lisbon Strategy by adding an environmental dimension to it. This “third pillar” of the Lisbon process (the others being economic and social reform), places a new emphasis on the protection of the environment and the achievement of a more sustainable pattern of development. The aim is to “decouple environmental degradation and resource consumption from economic and social development by 2010”.

The main priorities of this strategy are:

- Combating climate change
- Ensuring sustainable transport options
- Addressing threats to public health, and
- Managing natural resources in a more responsible manner.

According to the mid-term review of the Gothenburg Strategy carried out in 2005, the EU will now pursue a “stronger focus”, a “clearer division of responsibilities, wider ownership, broader support, a stronger integration of the international dimension and more effective implementation and monitoring” of the environmental policy in general, and the Gothenburg goals in particular.